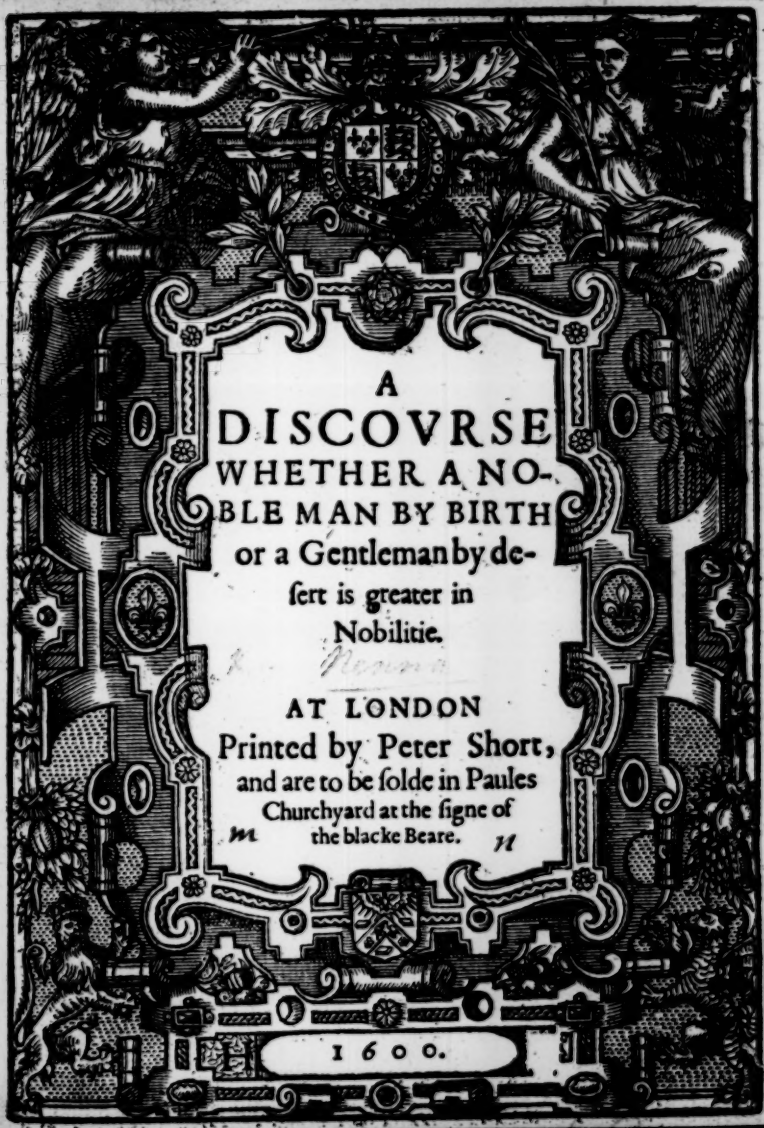


A DISCOVRSE WHETHER A NOBLE MAN BY BIRTH or a Gentleman by deſert is greater in Nobilitie.

AT LONDON
Printed by Peter Short,
and are to be ſolde in Paules
Churchyard at the ſigne of
the blacke Beare.

1600.



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38.

Who ſo wil ſeeke by right deſerts t'attaine
vnto the type of true Nobility,
And not by painted ſhewes & titles vaine,
Deriued farre from famous Aunceſtrie,
Behold them both in their right viſnomy
Here truly pourtray'd, as they ought to be,
And ſtriuing both for termes of dignitie,
To be aduanced higheſt in degree.
And when thou dooſt with equall inſight ſee
the ods twixt both, of both thē deem aright
And chuſe the better of them both to thee,
But thanks to him that it deſerues, behight:
To *Nenna* firſt, that firſt this worke created,
And next to *Jones*, that truely it tranſlated.

Ed. Spenſer.

¶

Here doſt thou bring (my friend) a ſtranger borne
To be indenized with vs, and made our owne,
Nobilitie, *whoſe name indeed is worne*
By manie that are great, or mightie growne:
But yet to him moſt natural, beſt knowne,
To whom thou dooſt thy labours ſacrifize,
And in whom al thoſe vertues beſt are ſhowne
Which here this little volume doth comprize.
Wheron when he ſhall caſt his worthie eies,
He here ſhal glaſſe himſelfe, himſelfe ſhal reed:
The modell of his owne perfections lies
Here plaine deſcrib'd, which he preſents in deed:
So that if men can not true worth diſcerne
By this diſcourſe, looke they on him and learne.

Sa. Danyel.

G. *Chapman to the Author.*

ACcept thrice Noble *Nennio* at his hand
That cannot bid himſelfe welcome at home,
A thrice due welcome to our natiue ſtrand,
Italian, *French*, and *Engliſh* now become.
Thrice Noble, not in that vſde Epethite,
But Noble firſt, to know whence Nobleſſe ſprung,
Then in thy labour bringing it to light,
Thirdly, in being adorned with our tung.
And ſince ſo (like it ſelfe) thy Land affoords
The right of Nobleſſe to all noble parts,
I wiſh our friend, giuing the Engliſh words,
With much deſert of Loue in Engliſh harts,
As he hath made one ſtrange an Engliſhman,
May make our mindes in this, *Italian*.

Ex tenebris.

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To be indenized with vs, and made our owne,
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By manie that are great, or mightie growne:
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As he hath made one ſtrange an Engliſhman,
May make our mindes in this, *Italian*.

Ex tenebris.

MY artleſse Muſe (if any muſe at all)
Couched in rude, in baſe, in home attire,
Not fitting thoughts, or actions that aſpire,
But led by loue, and graced principall
In this, ſhe once was handmaid vnto skill,
Would (if ſhe durſt her ſtem to raiſe ſo hie)
Blazon thy laud, who of Nobilitie
So much haſt ſhew'd, and therein dipt thy quill.
But ſithe thy zeale to Honour Nennio
Whom thy deſires haue brought from forreine ſoile,
Hath beene one cauſe of this thy taken toile,
Vnwaited on with praiſe thou mayſt not goe.
For lookers on that doe partake thy pleaſure,
Muſt of thy vertue find the pretious treaſure.

Ang. Day.

A Treatiſe of Nobilitie, written by *the famous Doctor, and worthy knight,* Sir Iohn Baptiſta Nenna of Bari.

The firſt Booke.

IT is a natural inſtinct in all liuing creatures, which cauſeth them to auoide ſuch perillous encounters, as do moſt commonly croſſe them in this life: Of the which we haue greateſt occaſion to beware, vvhen they are moſt dangerous, and noyſome. Which was the reaſon, that remaining with my brother in the learned citie of *Antenor*, not ſomuch to the intent to get the knowlegde of ſome new Art, as to learn the courteous and good behauiour of the place, being aſſailed with a peſtilent mortalitie, in the yeare 1528. we endeuoured as much as in vs lay (ſetting our ſtudie aſide) to ſaue our liues (to which opinion the moſt agreed) and ſo we departed from thence, and came to the auncient

citie that *Iapiges* the ſonne of *Dædalus* builded, ſcituate in the fertile countrey of *Pouglia*, neere vnto the waues of the *Adriatique* Sea: Which place of abode was farre more pleaſing to vs then any other, in regard wee were there ſtraightwaies entertained of our deere parents, and in poſſeſsion of our owne ſubſtance, from the which we had been a long time ſecluded. But the ſeaſon drawing neere, in the which the earth beginneth to cloath it ſelfe againe; this dangerous mortalitie followed vs euen vnto our own countrey, being beſides (without any pitie) afflicted, with cruel & ſharp wars, by the mightie inuaſion of the Frenchmen. We being then brought to this extremitie, to iſſue forth, ſeemed by the wars to be forbidden vs; and to forſake ech others company, by reaſon of the ſicknes, ſeemed not the beſt. Wherefore that we might in ſome ſorte diſcharge our ſelues of thoſe heauie cares, which did alwayes oppreſſe our penſiue imaginations, wee thought it beſt with choice of delightes (albeit wee reaped ſmall profite by them) to paſſe this wearieſome time.

As we led this kinde of life, I was one day againſt my will ſurpriſed with a dead ſleepe, in the which it ſeemed vnto me, to be entred into a deepe and moſt obſcure valley, where from a farre off, there came toward me a troup of yong ladies, all of them of verie venerable regard. In ỹ midſt of which (as their queene) there marched a ladie, apparelled all in cloth of golde, ſet forth with moſt coſtly Iewels. After her there followed another, far ſtricken in age, yet worthy of great eſtimation, whoſe garments were of a ſanguine colour, hauing a troupe of noble knightes going before her, ſome of them carrying in their handes ancient priuiledges, others trophees, & triumphes of their victories. Behind

theſe

theſe I perceiued another ladie of ſoueraigne authoritie, whoſe eies did ſeeme as ſparckles, and her countenance more liuely then anie I had euer before taken notice of, albeit ſhe was verie old: Sometimes her bodie ſeemed not to ſurpaſſe the common ſtature of women, and otherwhiles on the ſodaine you would haue thought ý ſhe had exceeded the height of heauen: She held in her hands a roial ſcepter, and was attended on (with great reuerence) with a diſcreet, & learned company. To conclude, ſhe ſeemed vnto me to be a moſt worthy ladie, of a mild aſpect, and wonderfull view: before her marched the firſt three, as leſſe worthy, who as ſhe went had on her head a crowne, as the marke of a mighty queene; her garments were diſtinguiſhed with diuers yellow, crimſon, and greene colours. And in as much as from her princely countenance, did proceed a ſhining light, I might eaſily perceiue al thoſe things: & me thought ý turning towards me, ſhe ſaid vnto me.

Yong man, the burthen of thy thoughtes, and the miſerie of the life thou leadeſt, are not hidden from me: wherefore to eaſe the one, and remedie the other, depart from this place, and take ſome new helpe vnto thee, to the end thou maieſt at the laſt purchaſe a more ſure, and vertuous eſtate of life. Scarſe had ſhe vttered theſe wordes, before I heard a rude and feareful voice, which ſaid vnto me: Packe hence, and be carefull of thy ſafetie.

Being much amazed at that voyce which had euen pierced my heart, and with my ſpirites looſing my naturall colour; at one inſtant breaking off both my dreame, and ſleepe, I awaked: and after that I had a little called my wittes togither, I pondered often in my vnſetled imagination, what thoſe thinges might ſignifie I lately dreamed on.

Conſidering then vvith my ſelfe the trueth of her wordes, and how much man is rather bound to follow vertuous actions then vaine pleaſures, which I had addicted my ſelfe vnto: I vndoubtedly determined, to followe her faithfull counſell, and vtterly to abandon that kinde of life, which by the ill diſpoſition of time, I was forced to leade. Wherein notwithſtanding, fortune ſeemed not greatly to fauour me: for much time ouerpaſſed not, before that the warre being in ſome ſort appeaſed, all our companie togither with the ladies and others (ſome being tied togither by kindred and allyance: others by knot of friendſhip) as well to auoide the ſcorching heate, as the frequentation of much companie in ſo contagious a ſeaſon; tranſported themſelues to a Grange of ours, ſeuen miles diſtant from the towne. There by reaſon of the conueniencie of a faire houſe, and of a moſt pleaſaunt and wonderfull delightfull garden, we ſtill remained, ſpending the time continually in ſuch ſports and paſtimes, as the ſeaſon of the yeare, the place and the companie did require.

It happened on a day, that as *Fabricio*, and *Poſsidonio* (two young gent. of our companie) walked abroad, they eſpied a noble ladie comming towardes them, whoſe name was *Virginia*, accompanied with an honourable traine, who was going right towardes the citie: whom when they were come neare vnto, they entertained with ſuch reuerence, as was due vnto her, and beſought her to make ſtay in that place, & to dine with vs: Shee ſeeing her ſelfe conſtrained by their earneſt entreaties, remained there with them, and was courteouſly receiued of this pleaſant companie. After ſhee had refreſhed her ſelfe togither with other ladies, ſhe took view of the houſe, garden, & that which

was

was moſt worthy to behold, the Gentlewomen, vvho alvvaies accompanied hir foot by foot, vnto the place vvhere the tables vvere couered for dinner: euery one of vs being ſerued in very decent & good order, & hauing ſtore of good & delicate meats, & moſt excellent wine, vve paſſed out dinner very merily, not vvithout many pretie quips. In the end it pleaſed this noble Lady (not vvithout great ſorrow of the vvhole company) to depart from vs, & hauing with moſt gentle ſpeech taken her leaue of the gentlemen and gentlevvomen, ſhe in like ſort vvent her vvay, after ſhee had thanked them all; vvhich notvvithſtanding, the tvvo yong gentlemen vvho firſt inuited her, did ſtill accompanie hir: but after they had gone ſome prety diſtance frō vs, ſhe vvould not ſuffer them to paſſe any further, but ſtaying her ſelfe and turning tovvardes them, ſhee ſpake vnto them after this maner. The gratious intertainment, the noble exerciſe, and pleaſant abode of this frolicke companie, haue this day bound my heart vnto them in ſuch ſort, that I ſhall neuer loſe the remembrance therof. Whervvithall taking a rich gold ring curiouſly vvrought forth of her boſome, ſhe ſaid: And to the end that you may be as mindfull of me, as is lawfully permitted, I doe beſtovv this ring vpon him that is the moſt noble of you tvvo, vvhom I incharge to vveare it in remembrance of me.

The concluſion of hir ſpeech, and her departure vvere at one inſtant, leauing the ring in his hands, who vvhen ſhe gaue it did not ſo vvillingly accept thereof. Howbeit *Poſsidonio*, as one deſcending of an ancient & noble family, being beſides indued vvith great riches, claimed the gift: but *Fabricio*, vvho reckoned himſelfe nothing inferiour to the other in nobilitie (albeit that his anceſtors were not of ſo noble bloud, nor him-

ſelfe bleſſed with ſo great wealth) hee pretended vvith great vehemencie, that the ring belonged vnto him, becauſe that from his youth, hee had been vertuouſly raiſed to that ſubſtance he poſſeſſed, and thereby become wiſe, prudent and well conditioned. So ſoone as they were returned to their companie, they ſtraightwaies declared the cauſe of their variance, ſhewing them the ring, which was framed in circle wiſe: on the one ſide whereof there was the picture of a yong ladie apparelled like a nymph, vvho held in her hand a royal Crowne, in ſuch ſort as if ſhe would haue ſet the ſame vpon ſome bodies head, round about the which was vvritten in Latine *Dignus coronabitur ipſa*, Let the moſt vvorthy be crowned herewith.

On the other ſide was the pourtraiture of a gallant young man crovvned thervvith, who held in his hand a green bough not much vnlike vnto an Oliue branch, about the vvhich vvas ingraued, *Victor, & merito coronatus*; I am crowned herewith as the conquerour, and that by deſart.

But by reaſon the controuerſie betweene theſe tvvo young Gentlemen, did grow more and more, vvho by occaſion thereof arriued there vnawares, they were all of one opinion (to the ende, that vvhereas this pleaſant companie vvere mette togither onelie for their recreation, that enmitie and hatred might not grovv thorough this ſodaine accident) to boult out the troth of this their doubt, they ſhoulde one after another ſet dovvne their reaſons, and afterwardes ſtand to the iudgement of a third perſon.

A Gentleman called *Nennio*, (one of the companie) vvas indifferently choſen by them, for that purpoſe, vvho after he had heard the reaſons debated on both ſides, ſhoulde by his wiſedome, giue iudgement

and

and ſentence, from vvhich they promiſed they would not appeale, but friendly reſt ſatisfied therewith. Albeit that the burthen thereof ſeemed heauie to *Nennio*, yet did he willingly ſuſtaine it, conſidering that peace on all ſides would follow thereby.

And becauſe that on either part the diſcourſe was intertained with no leſſe profite, then pleaſure, with pretie ſubtill argumentes, and wittie concluſions, I determined (aſvvell to auoide the heate of the ſeaſon, as to keepe me from idleneſſe) with my pen (ſuch as it is,) to ſet them downe in vvriting.

A great part of the day was alreadie ouerpaſſed, and the ſun in his declining, when as both the Gentlemen & ladies by common conſent did deſcend to the moſt pleaſant place of the garden, vvhere vve ſate orderly in circle-wiſe vpon the thin graſſe, which vnder the ſhadowy-ſweet-ſmelling trees was defended from the parching heate of the ſunne beames. *Poſsidonio*, as one deſirous to be the firſt that ſhould enter into the liſtes, was ſet in a place ſomewhat higher than the reſt; vvho after he ſaw vs all equally attentiue, and that our eares ſeemed as it were readie to heare him, gaue this beginning vnto his ſpeech.

Fabricio, If I knewe thee to be of that force, that thou wert able to impugne the leaſt of my reaſons, how weake ſoeuer they may ſeeme to be, I ſhoulde imagine my ſelfe to be in farre greater danger then I am. But contrarily, it cannot anie way ſinke into my thought, by vvhat meanes thou art able to reſiſt them, nor with what reaſon that carrieth with it a reſemblance of troth, thou art able to arme thy ſelfe againſt me.

Wherfore in my opinion it were far more fit, & more commendable before ſo worthy an audience (to the

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end the mindes of the aſsiſtantes might be more intentiue) to diſcourſe of ſome other queſtion more doubtful then this we are to intreate of, it rather becomming thy eſtate and condition, euen at the beginning to keepe ſilence: and yet it may be, that this diſcourſe liketh thee better, that thereby thou maieſt ſet forth the ancient and honourable ſtocke of thy predeceſſors, and their great large riches and reuenues. Howſoeuer it be, that thou maieſt not take me to be out of the matter, I will returne to our diſputation.

Worthy Gentlemen, the doubt vvhich this day is hapned amongſt vs, is not vnknowne vnto you (if ſo it be that vve ought to call it a doubt) for ſurely a more eaſie controuerſie did neuer riſe amongſt men. VVee ſhall ſoone ſee if *Fabricio* be more noble then I am, or vvhether I am more honourable then hee is. He might vvith more reaſon make a queſtion, vvhether the day be more cleerer than the night, or the ſunne more hote then the Moone: and perhaps there might be greater cauſe to doubt thereat, the baſeneſſe of his birth, and the vvorthineſſe of my bloud being more then ſufficiently knovvne vnto you. But ſeeing it is your pleaſure that vve ſhall diſcourſe thereof, I will vvillingly yeeld, being more conſtrained thereunto to ſatisfie your deſire then forced by reaſon, not diſtruſting anie vvhit of obtaining the victorie.

It lying then vpon me (louing Gent.) to prooue vnto you that I am a noble man, yea farre more noble then *Fabricio*: I will firſt ſhew you vvhat nobilitie is, which if vve do rightly vnderſtand as we ought, I doubt not but that our controuerſie vvill be finally determined without anie further debating of the matter. I affirme that to be true nobilitie (for *Fabricio*, thou canſt not varie from the opinion of all men) vvhich of long time hath been

beene left by the predeceſſours vnto the ſucceſſors, as a hereditarie gift, the name whereof is as wel imprinted in them, as the forme of the body; in aſmuch as hee that is borne of a noble family, ſo ſoone as he is broght forth into the world, is eſteemed amongſt the number of noble men, which is no leſſe apparant then true; for aſmuch as if we conſider any noble man whatſoeuer, ſurely thoſe that deſcend from him, ſhall be reckoned amongſt ſuch as are noble men.

Who is he ſo void of reaſon, that doth not account thoſe as noble men, who are diſcended of the ſtocke of the *Sforsi*, of theſe of *Eſts*, of the *Gonſagui*, and of a number of other moſt noble races? Surely, no manne. He then is a Noble man, who is iſſued of a noble familie. Let vs then conſider whether I or thou, are ſprung of noble parentes, to the end that the moſt noble of vs both may bee knowne. Tell me I pray thee, and take no ſcorne to let me know, whether thy anceſtors were Noblemen, or not: nay whether they were ſo much as reckoned amongſt gent. which ſurely I beleeue thou art not able to ſhew me. If then no Nobilitie was lefte thee by thy aunceſters, how doeſt thou now take that boldneſſe vpon thee, to giue thy ſelfe the tytle of a nobleman? By what meanes dooſt thou ſeeke to intrude thy ſelfe into the company of Gentlemen? What hope haſt thou to bee adiudged the more noble? Surely I know not how I ſhould perſwade my ſelfe therein: but contrarily, you cannot make any doubt, but that this nobilitie was left me by my predeceſſors, for both my grandfathers, and their great grandfathers and their iſſue, haue ſtill as it were from hande to hand, maintained themſelues in the order of noblemen: forſomuch as they haue alwaies ſhewed themſelues worthie men at Armes, and many of them haue beene lords of Ca-

ſtles and of Townes, albeit that enuious fortune hath bereft them of the greater part of this ſubſtance. I will not further inlarge my diſcourſe, to recken vp what my predeceſſors haue beene, being certaine that they are no leſſe knowne vnto you, then to my ſelfe.

Wherefore it may well be concluded, that I beeing the ſucceſſour of right Noble men, and thou borne of baſe parentage, that I am a Noble man, and thou art not; and ſo conſequently the ring which this day was giuen by the Lady *Virginia*, belongeth vnto mee, as to the moſt noble of the two. Now ſee *Fabricio* howe by little and little, I haue made it manifeſt, that thou art deceiued. Yet if ſo it were that thou ſhouldſt denie my concluſion, which is moſt true in it ſelfe, I woulde ſo forciblie work, that thou ſhouldſt of neceſsitie be conſtrained to yeeld therunto. For if they who doe expoſe their liues to a thouſand dangers, as it were men baniſhed from their own houſes, the ſpace of many yeares, in the ſeruice of their king, their coũtrey, or other princes, to purchaſe to themſelues a glorious name euerlaſtinglie, did conſider that ſo ſoon as they ſhould depart this life, their renowm and their glorie ſhould die with them, and not remaine to their children, and poſterity; he might ſurely be accounted fooliſh that woulde take paines, or indure any trauel or diſquiet: but they waighing that this name which they did get amongſt bloudy battails, did not onlie adorne their own perſons (which ſhould indeed be but a ſmal thing) but likewiſe all their whole ſtocke after them, they did not againſt their wil, but of their own accord enter into ſuch toile, & labour. Whereby it followeth of neceſsitie that we conclude, that the ſelfe-ſame renowme, and the ſelfe-ſame Nobilitie, that was in their anceſtors whatſoeuer it be, is trãſferred to their poſteritie: Bicauſe that naturally we haue

no

no better instrumẽt, nor more perfect means, by which the glorie and Nobilitie which is in men, may indure longe, then their children & posteritie: by them nobilitie is preserued, by them the generositie of families is liuelie maintained. Hitherto the words of *Posidonio* were continued, with a wonderful attention and without anie interruption: when *Fabricio* turning himselfe tovvards him spake after this manner. Passe on no further *Posidonio*, for I intend to answer thee to that thou hast thus far discoursed, & thou shalt vnderstand whether this nobilitie vvhich we seeke for, doth remaine in bloud, or not: & then thou mayst at leisure proceed, for as thou shalt frame thine argumentes, so will I likewise answere thee. At which offer *Posidonio* paused, but the company vvould not suffer that *Fabricio* should intermeddle to answer *Posidonio* his discourse, vntill hee had ended that which he should bee able to alledge in his defence. Wherefore silence being made, *Posidonio* proceeded after this maner.

You see moreouer (worthy Gent.) what operation nature affoordeth to the innobling of man. For if wee consider the gifts which it lendeth in the generation of man, you shall finde them wholie assembled in our fauour. Forsomuch as first it yeeldeth to this, that the ingendring of children is permitted to man, by meanes of his ovvn bloud; and after that it hath brought them forth into the vvorld, it laboureth to cause them to bee like vnto those, whose natural bloud is dispersed in their bodies: herehence proceedeth ỹ excessiue loue which the father naturallie beareth to his son, vvhich to speak the troth surpasseth all other loues in this worlde; as is best knowne vnto them that haue made tryall therof; the ingendred being deemed a part and member of the ingenderer.

Now whosoeuer he be that is begotten of a gentleman, and consequently of Noble bloud, who will once denie but that he is part of ỹ begetter? Surely no man. Why then the worthy nobilitie of them, no otherwise then their owne bloud, is dispersed in their children, as in a part of themselues. And namelie adde heereunto ỹ naturall resemblance of the father, which oftentimes denoteth cleerlie in their posteritie, the gratious countenance and good members, not onely of the father, but euen of the aunceſters likewise. Herehence afterwards it commeth, that as it were, euen the very manners, and liuely spirits with many of their vvorthy provvesses, are transfused into their children.

And of this the valiant deeds of *Scipio* the great may make thee assured, which as I haue often heard, and I beleeue thou knoweſt right well, were not vnequall to the prowesses of his father *Cornelio*. The like haue I vnderstood of the other *Scipio*: and if these were not of themselues sufficient, I coulde alledge manie other moderne examples. But you may be easilie perswaded herein, by that which we see euerie daie, that vvhileſt vve are children, vve doe so retaine within our selues, the childish conditions, vvhich are learned of our fathers, or of anie other whatsoeuer, that growing afterwardes to greater age, they remaine so fast fixed in our hartes, vvhether they be good or euill, as if we had beene taught them by nature hir selfe: and according to the diuersitie of men, vve doe learne diuers sortes of manners, for a husband man his sonne (or to speake generallie) a Hosier his child, or such like, wil not be of the same behauior & value, as a gent. his son, bicause there is more care had in ỹ one, & the other is rudely brought vp. Wherby it is easilie gathered, that the maners and prowesse of the father is conueyed from him vnto the children,

children, and ſo conſequently his nobilitie. Seeing then that nature doth in the creation of man yeeld bloud and reſemblance, whence this fatherly loue doth ſpring, to whom ſhall this ſort of Nobilitie which we tearme of bloud be left, but to a man his own children? ſurely not vnto ſtraungers, which euen nature it ſelfe would withſtand.

Poſsidonio paſſed on no further being in his diſcourſe interrupted by Madame *Caſſandra* (a wife and beautifull ladie of the companie) who hauing a little called her wittes togither, ſet vpon him after this maner.

If it be not lawfull for *Fabricio* at this time to anſwere thy diſcourſe, *Poſsidonio*, yet ſhall hee hereafter haue time, and memorie ſufficient to ſatisfie thy reaſons. In whoſe behalfe likewiſe I doe not ſeeke to ſay any thing: and if I ſhould, ſurely he ſhould be but badly defended by me. But that which I intend is as ſtrongly as I can to maintain thoſe reaſons which make for vs women: for without making any mention of thē, you haue ſleightly paſſed ouer them. In your laſt ſpeech (if ſo be that I did wel comprehend what you ſaid) you gaue vs to vnderſtand, that who ſo is ingendred of the bloud of a noble man, is nobly borne: In aſmuch as nature hath granted thus much vnto you, that children are engendred by meanes of your bloud: whereunto you added the reſemblance of the father, and his great loue towardes his children, which are all giftes of nature.

Now, if we will by a more true meane conſider the trueth of thy ſpeach, I perſwade my ſelf that theſe gifts which thou calleſt gifts of nature, being more proper to the woman thē to the man (as may eaſily be ſhewed) that in the Nobilitie of man, the Nobilitie of the mother ought rather to be conſidered then the Noblenes of the father. Who is ſo ignorant (at leaſt if this Nobi-

litie which thou ſpeakeſt of conſiſteth in bloud) that the bloud of the woman is no leſſe ſought by nature to ingender children, then the bloud of the man? Nay rather much more on our ſide, becauſe, as you know, the child once cõceiued, is by the ſpace of many months nouriſhed in our wombe, with our owne bloud, & ſomtimes two yeares after it is borne: whence it appeareth that children receiue a greater quantity of bloud of the mother then from the father. I will forbeare to ſpeake of ỹ paine of our bodie, the danger we are in, in child bearing; the anguiſh, and labour we ſuſtaine to bring them vp: al which things may euidently proue vnto you, ỹ the loue of the mother is far greater towards her child thẽ the fathers is: yea and ſomtimes likewiſe the child will as well reſemble the mother, as the father: all which is moſt manifeſt.

I ſay then, that if I would knowe if one be a gent. which is the marke you ſhoot at, I will haue recourſe vnto the qualitie of his mother, whether ſhee were a gentlewoman, and not vnto the conditiõ of his father, whether he were a gentleman, as you lately did argue: which may with reaſon be beleeued. But you men make laws as you liſt, & draw your reaſõs as liketh you beſt, ſetting vs ſilly women aſide, as if we were none of the number of the world: but if it were lawfull for vs to be preſent at your counſels, peraduenture matters would go otherwiſe, and ſo many thinges would not paſſe for currant (as this ſhould haue done) as they do.

Herewithall the ladie *Caſſandra* held her peace, and all the ladies did highly commend that which ſhee had ſpoken in their fauour, when as *Poſidonio*, not determining to replie anie thing vnto her wordes, ſpake after this maner.

Madame, as for me it is all one, whether wee take the

the bloud of the father, or of the mother: for I not only both by my fathers and mothers ſide, come of noble bloud; but my grandfathers, grandmothers, great grandfathers, and great graundmothers, were on both ſides of moſt noble deſcent, as is not vnknowne vnto you.

The wiſe lady did not reſt contented with *Poſsidonio* his anſwere, as if he had ſpoken ſmallie to the purpoſe, when as maiſter *Dominico*, one of my brethren, determining to ſatisfie her demaund, taking the matter vpon him, ſaid vnto her.

Madame, I perſwade my ſelfe, that if it were lawfull for you women to be preſent at our counſailes, as you ſaie, that your vertues would equall the Amazonian ladies, who baniſhed their husbands, tooke vpon them the gouernment of the kingdome, and diſpoſed thereof at their pleaſure, defending with their ſword the feminine libertie. Of the ſame mind was *Valaſqua* queene of the *Bohemians*, vvho conſpiring with the principall ladies of that kingdome, effected the ſame thing: but I beleeue you are not nowe a daies of ſo haughty a courage. Howſoeuer it be, I would not haue you beleeue, that you are any vvaies defrauded of your right, in that you propoſe, nor in any other thing in the vvorld, but rather vvhere anie fauour or aide may be giuen you, both the lavve, and the lavve makers, are readie therein: and you ought to be perſvvaded, that men doe not make lavves as they liſt, as you doe imagine: for ſometimes vvomen (vvhen as lavves made by men, haue not been pleaſing vnto them) they haue boldly oppoſed themſelues againſt them. As on a time at Rome a generall lavv being made, it vvas ſcarſely kept tvventie yeares: and it vvas this, that no vvoman ſhould apparell her ſelfe in diuerſe colours,

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nor weare anie ornament of gold that did exceede the waight of halfe an ounce, with ſuch other like matters, by which the laſciuious and licentious liſe of women, was reſtrained: for the principall ladies of Rome being aſſembled togither, without any regard or ſhame, not without great danger of ſedition in the citie, they did breake this lawe. Nowe then to ſatisfie you in that which lately you alleadged for the defence of women, in the middeſt of this diſputation: I ſaie, that I do not denie that in engendring of children, more quantitie of bloud doth abound on your ſide then on ours, becauſe that ſo ſoone as the creature is conceiued in your body, it is nouriſhed therewith. But you ought to knowe Madame, that the men of the worlde haue eſtabliſhed this lawe for firme, that in the Nobilitie of man', the condition and nobleneſſe of the father is conſidered, and not of the mother: for it is manifeſt, that when as in a ſubiect of perfection manie degrees doe concurre togither, wee take the name of the moſt worthy, and that of moſt power. As for example, wee ſee in the moſt renowmed maieſtie of our ladie and miſtreſſe, whoſe life being adorned with all worthineſſe, and repleniſhed with a moſt ſingular prouidence of honeſtie and holineſſe, is not onelie bruted in our countrey, but thorow all the world, ſhee is lawfully ducheſſe of our citie, and of a large extent of land, Princes of many other places, and moſt worthie queene of *Polonia*, and yet we terme her not by the title of Ducheſſe, or Princes, but alwaies call her queene, as the name of moſt worth, and moſt power. Nowe who doubteth but that the man, is farre more worthie, and of greater might then the woman? Peraduenture Madame you will denie this. Surely you cannot, becauſe this is no law which we men haue made,

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as you beleeue, but his law that hath made both man, and woman: when as hee taking diſpleaſure againſt our firſt mother, ſaid, man ſhal alwaies beare rule ouer you. It is then no woonder if wee ſeeke the condition of our father, as more worthy and excellent for the ennobling of man, then our mothers eſtate.

Moreouer, conſider one of theſe images, and behold likewiſe this ſtone which is neere vnto it, of the which there may eaſily another image be framed, which of theſe two will you deeme more worthie, the image or the ſtone? ſurely in my opinion the image. Nowe a woman is no other thing then as it were that ſtone, that is to ſaie, a ſimple matter, and man is as the forme or faſhion, and like as for the perfection thereof the matter doth couet the forme, ſo doth a woman for her perfection deſire a man. We will then conclude, that a woman is ſo much leſſe worthy then the man, as the matter is of leſſe eſtimation then the forme; or as that which ſuffereth, is leſſe worthy then that which doeth. Hereof it followeth, that we ought to be called after the name of the man as the moſt worthy. So that this propoſition is true, that in nobilitie, we haue onely to conſider, the nobleneſſe of the father.

M. *Dominico* hauing ended his talke, the lady being wel aduiſed, replied nothing thereunto, as though ſhee had been thoroughly ſatisfied therwith, when as *Poſidonio* following on his enterpriſe, began to ſpeake after this maner.

Gentlemen and ladies: The force which nature giueth to this nobilitie is ſo great, that wee ſee it doth not only preſerue the ſame in man, but likewiſe in other liuing creatures, not partakers of reaſon, yea euen in plants, as we may ſee in horſes, dogs, trees, and in other things. For if I deſire a faire horſe, or a good dog, or if

I intend to graft any excellent fruit, I will firſt of al ſeeke out the moſt noble horſe, the beſt hunting ſpaniell, and the moſt excellent tree of that ſort which I can poſsibly finde, becauſe it wil neuer faile to prooue like vnto that which hath engendred it, or to the plant. And euerie kind (to which nature hath giuen vertue to bring forth fruite) produceth it like, and not diſagreeing to it ſelfe, as we may ſee euerie where: whence it commeth to paſſe that man cannot engender any other thing then man. Wherefore if thou graunteſt vnto me *Fabricio* (and impoſsible it is but thou ſhouldeſt yeeld thereunto) that if I be deſcended of a noble family, it muſt needs follow (if we will not gainſay the law of nature) that I am a noble man.

Poſsidonio pauſed a while from his diſcourſe, or els made ſome ſtay to bethinke himſelfe howe hee might further proceede to fortifie his enterpriſe, and to trouble his enemie, or rather cleane to ſtop vp the paſſage, that he might without any outrage obtaine the deſired victorie; when as *Madam Laura* (the yongeſt amongſt the ladies, though no leſſe indued with wit and vertue then the reſt, being beſides of a quicke capacitie) turning towardes *Poſsidonio*, with a womanlike baſhfulneſſe, opened her corall lips, and began to ſpeake in this ſort.

Poſsidonio and *Fabricio*, I know not whether it may become me or no, to entermeddle with your diſputations, which perhaps are not fit for ladies, eſpeciallie for me which haue ſo little to ſay: but being rather couetous to learne, then deſirous to contradict any of you, if it may be lawfull for me, I will ſpeake that which commeth into my remembrance, leaſt otherwiſe I ſhould be blamed for a ladie of no ſound iudgement, and full of preſumption.

Fabricio

Fabricio immediatly gaue this answere. God forbid Madame, nay rather your vertue thereby will appeare more clearer, repleniſhed with moſt ſound iudgment, and not as you ſay, worthy any blame. For albeit it is not ſo beſeeming for ladies to diſcourſe of this argument, as it is delightfull to heare thē; notwithſtanding it ſhalbe a thing lawful, & permitted both for your ſelf, the reſt of theſe ladies, and anie of the gentlemen, to entermeddle and ſpeake what ſo ſhall come into their mindes, whether it be in doubting, anſwering, reprooving, arguing, or reſoluing of any thing, either on the one ſide or of the other, according to euery man his beſt iudgement. Forſomuch as the trueth of this controuerſie ought to be drawne from vs all, albeit that *Poſsidonio*, and my ſelfe in mine owne defence are choſen to yeeld our reaſons.

Poſsid. hauing ſhewed himſelf conformable to *Fabricio* his wil; the lady *Laura* after a long cōtinued ſpeech, with a womanlike voice, added that which followeth.

This is no ſmal matter, that hauing demanded leaue for my ſelfe only, I haue obtained it for the whole companie. For the which I doe giue thanks vnto you both: which being ſaid, ſhe turned againe towards *Poſsidonio*, and ſpake vnto him in this ſort.

It ſeemeth vnto me *Poſsidonio*, that the ſcope of thy laſt words did tend to this end: that in as much as man cannot engender any thing els but man, that thou being deſcended of noble parents, art for that cauſe a noble man, which in my iudgement cannot in any wiſe be wel concluded. For albeit that a man cannot beget any other thing then man, yet it followeth not that ỹ ſame qualities ſhuld remain in the children which are in the parents; & ſo conſequently hey is born of a noble man, albeit that of his father he receiue his being, and the

forme of his bodie, yet ſhall hee not receiue nobilitie therewith, which is as a qualitie, which either may be, or not be in the ſubiect.

Nay contrarily *Madame*, quoth *Poſsidonio*, he which is borne, receiueth in like maner the ſelf ſame qualities: becauſe that if a man be white, the child ſhal likewiſe be participant of his whitenes: if he be blacke, he ſhall be partaker of his blacknes: In aſmuch as whoſoeuer giueth the eſſence or being, he giueth likwiſe that which followeth the eſſence, which is manifeſtly prooued in our ſelues, and the *Ethiopians*.

The yong lady ſtood at a ſtay, it may be not knowing how to frame a replie. Wherefore *Poſsidonio* hauing a litle take breath, followed on his diſcourſe in this maner.

Gentlemen, by that which may be gathered by the words which I haue ſpoken, you may perceiue that nobilitie in man is giuen him of nature, and infuſed in his bloud; wherfore like as the lawes of nature are ſtable, & firme, ſo likewiſe nobilitie in the family of man thorow his bloud, by which it is continued, is permanent and durable.

Here M. *Iohn Franciſco*, one of the companie taking the ſpeech vpon him, ſaid in this ſort. The force of nature is ſo great in the procreation of children, that verie ſeldom, or almoſt not at all, there is any difference betweene the father and the child, as I will make manifeſt vnto you, by a tale or hiſtorie (if ſo you pleaſe I call it) by which you may know the mightie power of Nature in the nobilitie of man.

There was a gallant and noble ladie, who dwelleth not farre from hence (whoſe name for the reſpect I beare vnto her, I wil not manifeſt) married to a worthie knight, by whom ſhe conceaued, and did beare a faire yong ſonne. And as it happeneth very often, not ſo much

much in regard of the opportunitie which theſe ladies haue, as in reſpect that for the moſt part they liue daintily and idlely: it chanced (whether it were thorowe loue, or of her owne free will) her husband perceiuing nothing thereof, that ſhe ioyned hirſelfe to one of hir ſeruãts, ſo that in ſucceſsion of time ſhe brought forth two children. Now theſe growing further in age, the eldeſt did ſo farre exceede his other brethren (for ſo were they all eſteemed by the father) as the ſuppoſed father, did ſurpaſſe the true father: for as he waxed bigger, ſo did he grow comely of perſonage, and quicke of wit, whereas the other vvere very fooles, and blockheads; and the eldeſt of them did continually exerciſe himſelfe in worthy and valorous actions, he deſired to learne to be vertuous, hee tooke pleaſure in horſes, to run at the ring, and in al other honourable kinds of exerciſe, which by reaſon of his age hee was able to vndergoe, but the reſt ſhewed themſelues as baſe, & far from dooing any vertuous action: and indeed hee did no leſſe ſhine amongſt them, then the ſunne amidſt the reſt of the planets; the follie and cowardiſe of the other tvvo, vvas ſo great, that the common report did run euery where, that like as in behauiour and wit, they did differ from the other, ſo likewiſe they had another father: and their ſlothfulneſſe (beſides that there vvas no reſemblance betweene him and them) imprinted ſo great a beleefe in the husband, that hee conſtrained his wife to confeſſe the troth vnto him, and in the end ſhe being no leſſe forced by experience, then by nature it ſelfe, ſhe opened the whole ſecret vnto him.

And beſides the Lady I ſpeake of, I knowe yet two other women, who although they be deſcended of baſe parentage, yet are they faire and gratious to beholde, who not contenting themſelues with their husbandes,

as ill disposed vvomen are woont to doe, did when opportunitie serued them, and do stil, take their pleasure with yong men of Noble bloud, bringing foorth fruite answereable to their voluptuous pleasure: and this I know for troth, that by them they haue brought forth most noble children, whereas of their husbandes they haue had most clownish creatures, so that euen in beholding their naturall forme, and the constitution of their body, they doe giue sufficient testimony thereof. By this you may see how nature sheweth her power in the nobilitie of bloud; seeing from the same wombe is borne (by reason either of the noble or ignoble seede) a gentle and diuine spirite, and another abiect and base. And as concerning that *Madam Cassandra*, which you alledged euen now: answere might be made vnto you besides that which already is saide; That albeit in the generation of mankind there aboundeth more bloud on the woman her part; greater daungers, and greater labours, yet notwithstanding we ought to haue regard vnto the dignitie of the man, and not of the woman: for as concerning this matter we will compare the woman to the earth, which bringeth foorth fruit according to the seed it receiueth.

Hereunto maister *Dominico* again taking the speech vpon him said, These examples of yours M. *Iohn Frãcisco*, doe bring into my remembrance the succesſe of *Romulus* and *Remus*, who descended of the auncient royall stocke of the *Siluii*, and were as histories doe report, being little ones, by the commandement of their vncle *Amulius*, cast into the riuer *Tyber*, on the bãks whereof *Faustulus* maister of the kinges sheepe did find them, who knowing who they were gaue them to *Laurencia* his wife, that she might bring them vp; who notwithstanding was called a shee Wolfe, because she

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did willinglie yeeld her bodie as common amongſt the ſhepheards.

Now theſe children being brought vp in *Fauſtulus* his flocke, and growing in age, they did not intend the keeping of the beaſts, nor the leading of a country life, but firſt giuing themſelues to hunting, afterwardes to ſet vpō theeues, who were often endamaged by them, they began to ſhew the valor which was in them. And as fit occaſion fel out, *Fauſtulus* declared ỹ whole matter to *Numitor*, whoe before was baniſhed out of the kingdome by his brother *Amulius*, which hee hauing vnderſtood, immediatly his mind gaue him that they were his nephews, and comparing the time with their age, and conſidering their countenance, he verely affirmed, that they ſeemed not to bee clownes, nor of any baſe birth, but as if Nature hadde certified the troth, hee knewe that they came of the bloud Royall, and ſo accepted them for his Nephewes: now whoſoeuer will knowe what valour they were of, let him read further of them.

You may then ſee maiſter *Iohn Franciſco*, howe nature doth manifeſt the power of Nobilitie of bloud: for albeit they were nouriſhed amongeſt ſhepheardes, yet was not their bringing vp a hinderance to their naturall vertue. Maiſter *Dominico* hadde not ſo ſoone ended his talke, but *Poſſidonio* taking the ſpeeche vppon him, followed on his diſcourſe in this ſort.

Gentlemen; henceforward let vs forbeare to bring ſo many reaſons, as nature doth afford vs for the Nobility of bloud, for ſurely time would not ſuffice to aledge al that may be ſaid in that behalfe; & let vs a little weigh that which the cōmon brute & opinion of men dooth generally deem & beleeu therof. I wuld lern this of thee

Fabricio,

Fabricio, vvhat Towne, what Caſtle, and what village it is, where thou ſhalt not find this a general and common cuſtome, to cal and account thoſe noblemen, who are borne of a noble ſtocke? Surelie (as I beleeue) no place in the world. Nay rather ſo ſoone as they are brought forth, they are reckoned amongſt the number of thoſe that are reputed noble, and men doe not without reaſon attribute vnto them ſuch priuiledges as the countrey yeeldeth, ſuſtaining likewiſe ſuch labour and trauaile for the ſeruice and creation of them, as it behoueth them to vndertake.

This is a generall cuſtome, which we doe ſee is put in practiſe euerie where. And tell me I pray thee, if thou doeſt ſo much regard me; if thou diddeſt deſire to vnderſtand or knowe whether one were a gent. or not, were it not ſufficient for thee to heare that he is of the ſtocke of *Sainct Seuerini*, of the *Carraccolli*, or of the *Carraſi*, which are accounted moſt honorable amōgſt the noble families of Italie? Surely if thou dooeſt not ſwarue from common equity; thou muſt of force bee conſtrained to confeſſe the troth.

Now I deſire that euen thou thy ſelfe mayeſt conclude, and iudge whether of the two is the moſt noble, ſeeing that my houſe is as well knowne vnto thee as thine owne, and that it is ſufficientlie manifeſt which of them both being named, is reputed the moſt noble. It may be thy hart will ſerue thee, to auerre that it is thy familie that is ſo renovvmed in this Citie. I doe not beleeue except thou wert madde, that any ſuch folly would poſſeſſe thee, yet doe I perſwade my ſelfe, that thou wouldſt not be aſhamed, with thy ſophiſticall arguments, to make men deeme, that white is black: yet know this, that it is an hard matter to reſiſt the troth, & though I had not ſet vpon thee with any other weapon

then

then this laſt, it were ſufficient to make thee ſtark dumb But to paſſe on further, my force wil ſerue me to aſſaile thee yet more fiercely; for albeit thou tokeſt me to daie vnprouided, yet haue I other weapons to ſet vpon thee vvithall.

Gent. I hauing hitherto manifeſtly proued vnto you, both by nature and common cuſtome, that he is noble, whom nature hath brought forth of Noble parentes: I will nowe with no leſſe true, then pregnant reaſons, confirme the ſame vnto you. I doe affirme, and it is not a thinge to be doubted of, that if any man or vvoman, did commit any act, that ſhame and reproch followed thereof; not onely the ſaid parties, but all their poſteritie are ſpotted with ſhamefull infamie, which we doe euidentlie ſee euerie day: as for example, in a thouſand places you ſhall finde ſuch as are murderers of their own wiues, or haue laide violent handes on their owne fleſh, or beene executioners of their own ſiſters, and ſuch like: Only to repaire the inſupportable diſhonour which followeth the fact, which either the vvife, daughter, or ſiſter may haue committed in giuing them ſelues in pray to others, it dooth like a peſtilent mortalitie, which by bad gouernement entreth into a towne, ſpread it ſelfe all ouer, and infect all thoſe that are of that ſtocke. Nowe contrarilie I ſay, if any man by his worthy proweſſe, and lawdable actions, doth aſpire to great honour, ſurely all his poſteritie ought to bee partakers of that honour, nay they are not partakers therof, but it ought wholy and intirely to remaine vvith them. For it ſhould be againſt reaſon, whereas infamy and diſhonour ſhoulde by reaſon rather bee extinguiſhed, that they ſhould haue a larger ſcope to extende themſelues in mans poſteritie then renowme and glorie of man.

My predeceſſors then, hauing beene men worthie of glorie, proſperous in renowme, deſeruing honor, and conſequently capeable of all Nobilitie; it followeth of neceſſitie, that all their renowme, glory and honor, and their Nobilitie reſteth in mee, as their ſucceſſour. Shall we ſay the like of thy predeceſſors *Fabricio*, that there remaineth onely in thee, their worthineſſe and Nobilitie, whatſoeuer it was? Tell me if thou haſt any ſuch reaſon in thy braine? But ler vs yet proceede further, and I will yet alledge vnto thee another reaſon, to perſwade thee more firmely in that which wee ſeeke after.

Suppoſe a father hath two children, valiant knights, and repleniſhed with great learning, by which they make themſelues worthy of honour, the father himſelf notwithſtanding, being neither of valour nor learning; thou canſt not denie mee, but ỳ for al this the childrens honour and renowme redoundeth likewiſe to the father; for it is a common prouerbe, that the ſons greater eſtimation, is the fathers greater honour. From whence wee ſee, that good fathers who haue care of their children, ſtraine themſelues in ſuch ſort, to bring them vp, as that thereby they merite high reputation.

By greater reaſon then (not paſsing, but therein following the order of nature) the worthineſſe and greatneſſe of parents, is transferred vnto their children, as a part, and ſubſtance of themſelues: by which reaſon I may neceſſarilie conclude, that this worthineſſe, greatneſſe, and nobilitie, which hath been in my aunceſtors, remaineth now in me, who am a part & very ſubſtance of them. *Poſsidonio* pauſing a little to gather breath; maiſter *Peter Anthonie* my brother, deſiring to haue ſome part in this diſcourſe, beganne to ſpeake in this manner.

Seeing

Seeing that the Lady *Laura* (with a naturall grace) hath obtained leaue of you, that it is lawfull for vs to intrude our ſelues into your diſputation, not only in doubting and reſoluing, but alſo in arguing; I will alleadge without paſsion or partialitie againſt any one partye, that which falleth into my remembrance fitte for this purpoſe: and if it ſtrengthen thy ſide *Poſsidonio*, I promiſe thee *Fabricio*, I will doe the like for thee, as far as my memorie will ſerue me, and my vnderſtanding will affoord me matter. Whereunto *Fabricio* anſwered.

Spare not to ſpeake freelie what ſo it liketh you, for you cannot doe me a greater pleaſure, then in arguing to alleadge ſuch reaſons, as ſhall bee in fauour of the victorie on *Poſsidonio* his behalfe, and contrarie to my opinion, forſomuch as with little labour I ſhall refute them. So much the more willinglie (quoth maiſter *Peter Anthonie*) both my ſelfe and others, will heereafter ſpeake that which ſhall ſeeme beſt vnto vs, eſpecially, before the troth be by this your diſputation diſcouered.

There was then in times paſt, in the famous Citie of Rome this lawe (amongſt others) helde in great reuerence, leaſt that the memorable renowme of a valiant knight ſhould with his life take ende, that the Images of thoſe who had ouercome the enemies hoaſt, and conquered Kingdomes, not before brought into ſubiection, ſhoulde bee ingrauen and ſet in the moſt publike place of the Citie; vnder which a remembrance of their actes was written, which yet at this day we ſee in many places.

And that was done to the end (as I may ſay) to preuent nature in ẏ it could not giue; which was to make them immortall by perpetuall commendation, as alſo to the ende that their ſucceſſours pricked forward

with the desire of like glory and renowme (like as valorous horses at the sound of the trumpet) might not fear the labours of the bodie, much lesse the dangers of life, to auoid and to repell from their countrey all aduerse accidents hurtfull to the same and to purchase for it, all triumphant and prosperous dignity that might bee for the auaile thereof.

In troth the Images and triumphes inflamed mens boldnesse, and gaue them great courage, and these eternall remembrances, did moone the hearts of men: who are naturally desirous of honour and glorie. For it was a thing ordayned among the Romaines at a certaine prefixed time, in festiuall manner to visite these bodies, and behold these Images. What more greater glorie & greater triumph may be desired in this world of any liuing man? Surely the hart cannot wish, nor the toung demand any greater.

Appliable to this purpose I say, that if these men in remembrance of their singular vertue and great courage, did attribute such great honour to images, vvhether they were marble or mettall, how much more did these owe to the liuing children, I beleeue no lesse, but rather more; in asmuch as a fained forme of man, is lesse to be esteemed then that which representeth him truely. Which may bee apparantlie discerned by any whosoeuer, though but of small iudgement.

For what occasion did the common wealth of Rome set in gouernment the *Camilli*, *Fabii*, *Scipiones*, *Emilij*, *Catones* and others, but for the glory and renowme of their predecessors? See we not the same obserued this day among moderne princes? It followeth then reasonably, that this grace and nobility which is in the predecessors, doth deseruedly remaine with the children.

Scarce had maister *Peter Anthony* ended his discourse,

courſe, when *Poſsidonio* purſued his ſpeach after this maner.

It ſhould be ſurely a fooliſh thing, to beleeue that it remained with theſe immoueable and fained images, and not with their children. For what profit are they able to bring vnto the commonwealth? ſurely none (beſides the example which by them is left to poſteritie) but the offſpring of noble men may yeeld & lend great helpe vnto it dayly as wee ſee continually. For as much as if wee looke into the eſtates and commonwealthes of the worlde, which are gouerned diuerſly: ſhalt thou find *Fabricio* that the rule and managing of them is graunted to anie other, ſauing to thoſe that are reckoned to be noble? And if you demaund of whence this proceedeth. I would anſwere thee in my opinion, it ariſeth of no other cauſe, then that the predeceſſors of him that is noble, hauing ſubmitted not onely his goodes, but life alſo, to a thouſand dangers and hazardes for his countrey, it ſhould be great vngratitude, (nay rather might we iudge it crueltie) if that ſo ſoone as they receiued their laſt mortall wound, they ſhoulde ſlip out of remembrance, or that it ſhould denie them the reward worthie their labours. Whereupon, that they may not incurre ſo great note of inhumanitie, the gouernment of commonwealthes ought to be giuen them, as good meanes to preſerue them. And as they which doe repreſent the dead members of their predeceſſors.

Maiſter *Dominico* added hereunto: we doe not onlie ſee this vſed in our time, as in the rich and well ordered citie of *Venice* and elſwhere, we may perceiue that the gouernment and adminiſtration of the eſtate is giuen vnto gentlemen, but as I haue often read, the like was done in time paſt. In the citie of Rome at that time

more renowmed then any other, the Senators were held in great eſtimation of Nobilitie. And if they were accompted in the order of Senators, and conſequently of true noble men which were deſcended of Senators: We wil then ſay, according to the former reaſons, that the Children and iſſue of noblemen are true and perfect noble men. Theſe laſt wordes were ſcarce ended, when as the ladie *Camilla*, whoſe naturall whiteneſſe tempered with a vermillion colour, hiding her ſelfe as if ſhee had ſomewhat been aſhamed, her face burning like fire, & turning toward maiſter *Dominico*, in whom ſhe put great truſt, with a womans voice ſayde thus.

It ſeemeth vnto me that this day you are all oppoſed to *Fabricio*, ſeeing that you ceaſe not together with maiſter *Peter Anthonie*, to alleadge new reaſons for *Poſsidonio*: but beſide that hee himſelfe in anſwering them can refute them al, I will not forbeare to pay you in ſuch ſort as you know.

Madame (quoth hee) hereafter I will take heed, ſeeing that you are not pleaſed that wee ſhoulde entermeddle in this diſcourſe, to the end that this day, I doe not againſt my will incurre a penaltie, which I am not able to beare.

Theſe laſt words gaue occaſion to the companie of laughter: whereupon *Fabricio*, without any farther ſtay, ſayd:

Madame, let euerie one of them alleadge the moſt pregnant and ſtrong reaſons they can, for I ſhall not want courage ſufficient to confute them all: doe not you know that the glorie of the conquerour is ſo much ỹ greater, as the force of the vanquiſher doth exceed: which was the cauſe that *Poſsidonio* laughing more at *Fabricio* his ſpeech, as making ſmal accompt thereof,

then

then at the young Ladie, followed on after this ſort.

We doe not onelie finde this to be true in the gouernment of Cities and Prouinces, but likewiſe in Biſhoprickes, Cardinalſhippes, and ſuch other. Thou ſhalt not ſee *Fabricio* (and if it happen, it is verie ſeldome) that theſe offices and dignities are beſtowed vpon anie other then gentlemen. By which thou mayeſt well conſider what helpe and profite thoſe do bring vnto vs, which are borne of Noblemen, more then the fained images of the Romaines held by them in great obſeruance, for an euerlaſting remembrance.

Conſider beſide thoſe reaſons alreadie recited, that with Princes, Kinges, Emperours, Popes and in anie place of eſtate, the noble man by bloud goeth formoſt, and hee which is noblie borne is onelie honoured, and to him onelie, the place fit for his nobilitie, is by good right alway graunted.

M. *Iohn Franciſco*, with a good grace added herevnto.

We doe not only ſee this in vſe among Princes, but alſo among priuate perſons, that Noble men are preferred before other: eſpecially, when they meete at banquets, where they are more honoured, and ſerued with more attendance.

Maiſter *Dominico* taking the ſpeeche vpon him againe ſaid, I haue yet other reaſons to alleadge in the fauour of *Poſsidonio*, but that I feare to incurre this day her diſgrace, which I would not: The ladie *Camilla*, hauing by threates forbidden that, which gratiouſly you had graunted. To whom in anger ſhee anſwered; And what woulde you ſay more, then that you haue alreadie ſpoken? Madam, quoth he, I woulde ſay that:

The

The great Architect of heauen and earth intending to send his only beloued sonne into the world to couer his diuinitie with our humanitie, to the ende to free man, who was miserably wrapped in sinne (For scarce had he been framed by his creator, but he immediatly shewed himselfe disobedient towardes him, and that by subtle deceite of him, who rebelling against his maker, was with his copartners banished the heauens, and is eternally condemned to the depth of hell) This diuine word, to become man did not chuse those parents in this world, which were of an abiect and base familie, but his wil was, to descend of the royal bloud of *Dauid*. He was surely most meeke, humble and poore, in that he loued al these things & preached the same to others, yet notwithstanding, he would not be born of a meane and base bloud as I said. If then this nobilitie of bloud, was esteemed of the sonne of God, man incarnate, how much more ought wee who are his followers, deeme it a thing to be beloued and reuerenced? surely verie much. Doe we not reade likewise, that *Herod Ascalonita* the sonne of *Antipater*, of base linage, being chosen king of *Iudea* by *Octauian* the second Emperor, hee made a decree, that all the bookes wherein were written the noble and great generations of the twelue Patriarches shuld be burned, to the end ẏ he being not found there written among thē, by succession of time might easily be credited, that because hee was king of *Iuda*, he was descended of the bloud Royall (I meane of the stocke of Israel) from whence the Patriarches were deriued, which he infinitely desired, to the end that he and his successors might be alwaies reputed in the number of noble men?

Doe not we reade likewise of *Equitius*, who being the sonne of a bondslaue and made free, did feine himselfe

ſelfe to be the ſonne of the moſt renowmed *Tiberius Gracchus*? What ſhall I ſay of him that tooke vpon him that boldneſſe, that with a maruellous ſubtletie, hee perſwaded the people of Rome that hee was the ſonne of *Octauia*, ſiſter of the Emperour, and of *Marcus Antonius*, and that hee was deſcended of the royall bloud? And of that Barbarian, ſprong of baſe parentage, who in regard of the naturall reſemblance which hee did beare to *Ariarat* king of *Cappadocia*, alreadie ſlaine by *Marcus Antonius*, tooke vpon him the courage to ſay that hee was king *Ariarat*, by which meanes the Cities of *Aſia*, yeelded the kingdome vnto him.

You may ſee how great a number there was of thoſe, who not contenting themſelues with their baſe birth, haue ſought (as manie do at this day) to ennoble themſelues in the worthie families of other men. Wee may then well conclude, that there is no ſmall number, but contrarie the greater part of the worlde doe runne after this nobilitie, to make themſelues worthy of glory, and leaue a memorable renowne vnto their poſteritie.

You may ſee then Madame *Camilla*, whether I haue had anie thing to ſay in the fauour of *Poſsidonio*, and whether I haue not ſtopt vp *Fabricio* his paſſage. Whereunto ſhe anſwered, that which thou haſt ſtopped he will eaſily breake through, and finde meanes to binde thee ſurely. Some ſuch wordes paſſing between them, *Poſsidonio* followed on his diſcourſe, after this maner.

Surely, faire ladies, there is no man in ŷ world, which doth not deſire and reuerence nobilitie of bloud, that exalteth thoſe that poſſeſſe it, euen vnto the cloudes. Yet will I not recount vnto you from point to point, all that may be ſaid in fauour thereof. Wherefore it is nowe high time, that I drawe neere the matter, and

that I bring this my diſcourſe to certaine true effectes. And ſurely in a fewe wordes, I may conclude, that he being Noble, who is borne of Noble Parentes, as I ſaid; there neede not be anie doubt whether the ring giuen by the noble Ladie, belongeth to any other then to my ſelf, who am the moſt Noble. My anceſtors *Fabricio*, were of no baſe houſe, I am not deſcended of any obſcure parentage: but contrarily, there are manie ages that their renowne hath ſhined amongſt men, & there is none of you that is ignorant therof, for there are alreadie manie yeares paſſed, wherein they haue expoſed themſelues to do their princes ſeruice. Ought the aid that they haue continuallie yeelded them, be of no account? Inaſmuch as they haue valiantly fought againſt their enemies, and couragiouſly oppoſed them ſelues againſt all hazardous daungers, not flying from any labours in the world.

They haue not made anie accompt, neyther of heate, nor colde, nor of all the incumbrances, which did croſſe them: and we are not ignoraunt how manie troubleſome broyles they haue freed our Citie from, and what aſsiſtance they haue yeelded thereunto. Which the ornamentes of their victories doe ſufficiently declare, which may be ſeene in manie places of the citie. I could (if there were anie ſuch neceſsitie therein, as there is not) ſhewe you many auncient priuiledges which they haue receiued of auncient kings, by which it may eaſily be perceiued of what eſtimation they haue been, and whether they were reputed amongſt noble men, or not. I forbeare to ſpeake of the armories of our houſe, in the which there is no figure, nor marke, which hath not been graunted by ſome king or other. What wilt thou that I ſay farther? truely it is irkeſome to me to reckon vp any more.

Thou

Thou ſeeſt what matter I might bring in on the behalfe of Nobilitie, and worthineſſe of my auncestors, albeit that I haue to day alleadged as it were nothing at all. This is the principall part of Nobilitie, to bee able before men, at large to diſplay the famous prowesſes of his auncestors, whoſe glorie and renowne, to the ende that it may liue eternallie, doth remaine in their poſteritie. Wherehence I might rightly affirme, that all their honour, glorie, magnificence, and nobilitie reſteth in me. And to conclude, I may tearme my ſelfe as a part of thoſe noble perſonages, from whom ſo great Nobilitie is proceeded.

In my countenance appeareth their honourable lookes, and all their glorie, as in him who is their lawfull heire, ſhineth in me. This is then that kind of Nobilitie, which amongſt men cauſeth a man to be renowmed and honourable: albeit there is another ſort of Nobilitie (as ſome will haue it) of ſo great power, that although a man be not deſcended of noble bloud, yet doth it notwithſtanding cauſe him to bee eſteemed honourable. And that is it (worthie companie) (as I thinke) wheron *Fabricio*, when hee will indeuour his beſt to ſpeake what hee can for his Nobilitie, will moſt of all extend his diſcourſe vpon: for he will haue no other prop, nor ſtaie, to keepe himſelfe on foote, I meane, that hee will wholly reſt himſelfe vpon learning, and therewithall make his reſiſtance. Wherefore it ſhall not be from the purpoſe, vnto that which I haue ſpoken, to adde theſe fewe wordes, by the which I doubt not, that without any great trouble vnto you, but that I ſhall ſhewe you, what Nobilitie learning can bring vnto man, when I ſhall haue ſet downe what I ſhall thinke thereof: which, it may bee, ſhall not be farre out of the waye, and you may iudge

howe greatly *Fabricio* ſhall be deceiued.

I ſay then (worthie companie) that not onely hee is a noble man (as ſome doe beleeue) who draweth his beginning from a noble ſtocke, as by that I haue alreadie diſcourſed you may haue vnderſtoo de: but likewiſe he is eſteemed amongſt noble men, who albeit hee be not deſcended of noble bloud, yet giuing himſelfe vnto learning, doth gaine ſome credite and reputation amongſt men. And this kind of Nobilitie (if notwithſtanding we ought to tearme it ſo) certainly is recommended, as a thing no leſſe good then laudable: but I doe flatly denie, that they doe attaine to perfit Nobilitie, except they receiue therewith this Nobilitie of bloud. Yet I will ſay, and it may be it is not farre from the trueth, that learning is rather an ornament of Nobilitie then cauſe thereof. And will ſay more, according vnto my opinion, that it giueth a certaine facilitie, or rather a beginning vnto man, to become honourable, but it doth not indeede make him noble, as peraduenture *Fabricio*, thou diddeſt perſwade thy ſelfe.

Foraſmuch as if in anie matter wee conſider learning meerely in it ſelfe, without anie other qualitie, or ornament that is required in Nobilitie, we ſhall finde that it doth not make him honourable, that poſſeſſeth it, but hee ſhall be like vnto a faire pretious ſtone, ſet in the middeſt of ſome baſe and vile mettall: and like as a ſmall candle doth giue but a ſlender light vnto thoſe that beholde it, I ſay verie ſmall, in regarde of a great Torche: So doth this kinde of Nobilitie ſhine, in regarde of that other which I lately ſpoke of.

And be not thou ouer hard of beliefe heerein, for I ſhall very eaſily prooue this vnto thee. Imagine

ſuch

ſuch a one in thy mind, who is graced with good manners, learning and knowledge, but in bad apparell, as there are many ſuch; and likewiſe another, void of learning, but in braue attire fit for a gentleman, and that they be both vnknovvne vnto thee: what anſwer wouldeſt thou make, if my ſelfe or any other ſhould demand of thee, which of theſe two were a gentleman? Surelie as I thinke, thou wouldſt ſay the laſt of them, and whoſoeuer hath any ſound iudgement would not thinke otherwiſe; and this proceedeth of the inſufficiencie of learning: for as I haue ſaid vnto you, it is not of it ſelfe ſufficient, at one inſtant to bring forth the effects of nobilitie.

I ſay then that there wanteth ſomewhat elſe, and it is riches, which are an ornament, or rather a part of nobilitie, which if thou doſt conioine with learning, it may be that then I will beleeue that he that poſſeſſeth both, is become noble; for then two cauſes doe concur togither, neither of the which of themſelues, would bee ſufficient. He then that wil be accounted noble, ought aboue al things eſpecially to abound in wealth. O how many learned men haue I knowne in my time, whoe contemning theſe goods (for ſo are they rightlie called) haue beene, and are yet vilely deſpiſed themſelues. Doeſt thou thinke *Fabricio*, that now I tell thee troth? Now I can but imagine what courage thou canſt haue, ſeeing the ground more and more to ſinke vnder thy feet, vvhat leaning ſtocke wilt thou haue, when as that vvhereon thy mind did moſt of all ſettle it ſelfe (following thy falſe opinion) doth leaſt of all ſerue thy turne? Learning will not much helpe thee, wherefore thou mayeſt boldlie put thy truſt in ſomewhat elſe; for in thee there is no nobilitie at all to be conſidered. Yet to the end that thy hart may not bee ouercharged vvith

melancholie, I will grant thee thus much, that thou art become noble thorough learning, which being ſuppoſed as true, arguing in this ſort, I may ſaie vnto thee. It is a matter manifeſt which can in no ſort be denied, that dame Nature doth both in dignitie and perfection, far ſurpaſſe induſtrious art, ſeeing it doth onely in the operation thereof force it ſelfe, to imitate nature. Now this ſort of nobilitie, which thou wouldſt haue in thy ſelfe, is not naturall, but artificiall, bicauſe as I haue ſaide vnto thee, thou art not noble by nature, but ennobled by the exerciſe of learning, and ſo conſequentlie noble by Art.

But yet this is not ſufficient *Fabricio*, I will yeelde thee many other reaſons, to ſhew thee that I am more noble than thou art, although that there were Nobilitie in thee. Thou canſt not in any ſort denie mee, that as often as two equall thinges doe ſtriue togither, but that all honour and reuerence is attributed to the moſt ancient: if then both of vs be noble, as I haue alreadie granted thee, and doe againe yeeld thee, ought not I to be adiudged more noble, as hee which deſcendeth of more ancient nobilitie, or contrarilie thy ſelfe, who art but an vpſtart Gentleman?

Surely if thou leaneſt vnto the truth, thou canſt not ſay otherwiſe. But God knoweth what occaſion thou haſt now to reioice, ſeeing that without taking any further paines, I haue granted thee that thou art a Noble man: alaſſe, I beleeue this thy mirth will be but ſmall, being intermingled with ſo great ſorrow. So that not onelie the ground will faile vnder thy feet, but likewiſe the breath in thy mouth, nothing remaining for thee hereafter to ſay.

Thou ſhalt ſee that indeed hereafter quoth *Fabricio*, taking the ſpeech vpon him with a good grace, ſtretching

ching forth and wagging his right hand at *Posſidonio*, in a mocking maner) yea thou ſhalt well perceiue whether the breath will faile in my mouth, as thou ſaieſt: for ỹ ſhalt wel feele of what force thoſe new fables are, which thou haſt this day ſet to ſale in fauour of this thy nobilitie; and ſhouldeſt yer this haue well perceiued it, if it had beene lawful for me to anſwere thy arguments as I am well furniſhed with matter.

Thou canſt doe no leſſe, quoth *Posſidonio*, with a ſiniling countenance, then cal them new fables, ſeeing that they doe ſo newly torment thee: but thou ſhalt finde them true hiſtories againſt thy ſelfe.

Fabricio replied I know not what, at which inſtant the lady *Aurelia*, graced with beautie, and the guifts of nature, vvho vntill that time had attentiuely noted and paſſed vnder ſilence the wordes of *Poſſidonio*, turning hir ſelfe towards him, with a womans voice ſaide thus vnto him.

Holding this thy laſt concluſion as true *Poſſidonio*, to wit, that honor & victory ought to be giuẽ to the moſt ancient, I would gladly vnderſtand, if the ſame queſtion which is this day betweene you two, did happen between 2. yong men equal in Nobilitie of bloud, to whither of the two thou wouldſt giue the price & victory?

Mary to him Madam (quoth *Poſſidonio*) whoſe Nobility as I lately ſaide, were moſt ancient.

To which ſhe replied, but how wilt thou know, whether of the two were more ancient, for that ſeemeth a hard matter for me to diſcerne?

Madam (quoth *Poſſidonio*) it is a verie eaſie thing: for therein we ought to followe the common opinion of men of the country, when ỹ ſame cannot otherwiſe be determined by priuiledges, or other lawful meanes.

M. *Peter Anthonie* added hereunto. Many yeares agoe

agoe, Madam, ſentence is giuen in determination of that which you doe demand; and as I thinke not onlie your ladiſhip, but all that are heere preſent haue read thereof.

Whereunto the lady *Laurelia* ſaid. We neuer ſtudied theſe your diſputations, which in regarde that wee are women, are as farre vnmeet for vs, as the handling of vveapons.

Peter Anthony replyed, I doe not ſpeake from the purpoſe Madam. I ſay that many yeares ſince, a queſtion fell out betweene two noble young men of *Florence*, to wit; vvhether of them vvere the better Gentleman, and of more ancient nobilitie in that citie: of the which, as euery man vvas affected, ſome men did prefer the one of them, ſome the other: Finally, it was adiudged that the *Baronesi* (of vvhich houſe one of the Gentlemen were) vvere the moſt ancient gentlemen, not onely in *Florence*, but in all the world.

And hovv may that be credited (quoth the lady *Aurelia*) or concluded by any firme argument?

Mary, quoth he, it vvas confirmed with a moſt forcible reaſon. Forſomuch as all they vvho were iſſued of the bloud of the *Baronesi*, ſome of them had a very long & thin face, others extreamly broad, ſome a long noſe, others very ſhort; this man one eie greater then his fellovve, that other one eie lovver ſet then another, & beſides al this, their bodies very deformed, in reſpect of other men. Which thing gaue the iudge good cauſe to thinke, that they vvere made by nature in that ſeaſon, vvhen ſhee began firſt to frame men, and ſo they vvere the moſt ancient, and moſt noble: vvheras other men vvere made, when as ſhe knevv better how to faſhion them; who being not ſo ancient, were not conſequentlie ſo Noble. So that Madame, if you deſire of

two

tvvo yong men, or of many, to know which of them is the moſt noble, look which of them is moſt deformed, for he is ſurely deſcended of the moſt ancient ſtock, and ſo the moſt noble.

Truelie novv I remember (quoth the lady *Aurelia*) to haue read the ſtorie as you report it.

This nevv and vvitty argument of nobilitie, with the good vvit of the iudge, was vvith a pleaſant laughter recommended of the vvhole companie, vvhich vvhen it was ceaſed, *Poſsidonio* began againe thus to followe on his diſcourſe.

Seeing that my tales are of no force, as *Fabricio* latelie ſaide, I know not truely hovv I ſhould perſwade my ſelfe, vppon what hee will laie any foundation, on the which hee may reſt, nor with what reaſons hee ſhall be able to vphold himſelfe: in aſmuch as if we ſpeak of bloud, he cannot compare with me; as a thing hee neuer came neere, as he will freelie confeſſe vnto me: if of learning, I will not begin againe to diſcourſe any more therof: for I haue franklie ſpoken thereof what I think, and you may iudge as vvel as my ſelfe, whether it maketh for him, or not. It may be he groundeth himſelfe vpon riches. Surely it ſhould be an open follie to think ſo, much more to ſpeake it. If then hee bee not to bee compared vnto mee, neither in bloud, nor in riches; from which two things, true and perfect nobilitie doth ſpring: and if learning bee of no moment in matter of Nobilitie; it may well appeare howe his iudgement is more then deceiued, and his will more then obſtinate. And to the end that none of my reaſons may goe without due proofe; I will make this manifeſt vnto you likewiſe, to wit, that I ſurpaſſe him as farre in riches, as in Nobilitie of bloud, as I haue heeretofore concluded. Which of you gentlemen, are ignorant, that if the leaſt

part of my wealth were set on the one side, and all that he hath heaped on the other, that mine would not farre exceede the value of his? which I doubt not but you will iudge superfluous for me to declare, beeing a matter cleere inough of it selfe. Yet seeing we are entered therein I wil not forbeare to speake thereof.

Consider then (worthy Gentlemen) that if the great wealth and substance which is so much desired of mortal men, be not vvholie vnited in me, yet at ỹ least I possesse the greater part of it. For if vve talke of statelie Palaces, I am owner of such as cause those that doe behold them to wonder, and they are especiallie furnished with rich and pretious stuffe. If of pleasant Gardens, I haue many of them, which doe abound in all that which is beautifull to the eie, and delightfull to behold. I will not reckon vp vnto you, the fruitful fields, nor the shadovvy woods, from the which al that which is necessarie for the life of man, may bee gathered; for thanks be to God, I haue sufficient store of them: lesse will I tel you what flocks of sheep I possesse: for it may be if I should speake of them to others, I should not bee beleeued. I will likewise forbeare to declare of the gold and siluer, vvhich is alwaies in my treasorie: & finally I refuse to speake of many other particularities, vvhich my selfe am ashamed to rehearse, and that bicause they are as well knovvn to your selues, as to me. I thinke it likewise very superfluous, to open vnto you, what great feasts, rich apparell, pompe, chiualry, musicke, songes, and al other manner of pleasures, sports, and feastings, which matters are no lesse necessary then honorable, to personages truly honorable, as things vvhich do of thē selues, shew themselues, and are wel knowne of you to be continuallie obserued by me. Now to the ende you may iudge aright, you ought to consider, what & how great

great, *Fabricio* his vvealth is.

Scarce had *Poſsidonio* giuen ende to the ſound of his laſt words, when as *Fabricio* moderately and ſuddenlie ſmiling, I knovv not vvhereat, and afterwardes ſhaking of his head, he ſpake in this ſort.

Truely *Poſsidonio*, thou doſt this day lay a great burthen vppon thy ſhoulders; if thou dooſt vndertake to ſhew others my wealth or goods (as thou termeſt thē) forſomuch as not only that ſmal time of the day which remaineth, no not a vvhole day would be ſufficient to reckon them vp. Wherfore paſſe on further, and toile not thy ſelfe about that, thou needeſt take no care for: for if thou wilt, I wil yeeld vnto thee, not only that thou art rich aboue any other, but that al the riches of the world be in thy poſseſsion.

I am very certaine *Fabricio*, (quoth *Poſsidonio*) that the troth doth force thee to grant it me. Wherfore this my propoſition gent. is true, that I doe not onely farre ſurpaſſe him in bloud, but in riches likewiſe. And now vvilt thou yet haue the heart to vndertake to ſhevve vs ẏ thy Nobilitie is greater? For I poſſeſſing al the ornamentes that are to be deſired of mortal men, *I* cannot be perſwaded, that thou haſt any courage left to ſpeake any more therof. Wherfore it would wel become thee to hold thy peace, and to yeeld, that thy reaſons which are of no force may giue place to mine. It were then beſt for thee, not to charge ſo heauy a burthen vpon ſo vveake ſhoulders, for hauing to day without varying from the troth, alleadged ſo many vvorthy & excellent deeds of my anceſtors, & made account of ſuch great abundance of riches, wherhence the perfection of Nobility doth ſpring, I would but know vvhat thou haſt to ſay? It may be thou wilt inform vs of the braue combats and valiant battels of thy anceſtors? Or ſhew vs vvhat

faire palaces & pleſãt gardens thou haſt? Wherfore if as thou deemſt thou haſt any ſound iudgment in thee, indure not any more that this matter bee further diſcouered; but hence forward pronounce that ſentence againſt thy ſelfe, which we attend from the iudge: which being ſaid, he pauſed a little, and then followed on his diſcourſe in this ſort.

I would here end my diſcourſe, faire Ladies, were it not that I haue yet to ſay, that riches are an ornament and part of nobilitie, which if it were not a trouble vnto you, I would moſt willingly proue.

It cannot be troubleſome vnto vs (quoth one of the Gent.) caſting vp his eies into the skie, ſeeing that the ſunne is as yet aboue the tops of the trees. This anſwere pleaſed likewiſe the reſt of the company, to the end *Poſidonio* might follow on his diſcourſe; wherefore taking the ſpeech vpon him, he continued in this manner.

Ought not we, gentlemen, to eſteeme of the grace and ornament which riches do bring to Nobility? Vnto the which it hapneth like as to a garden, which beſides all other daintie-, is bewtified with diuers flowers which nature doth bring foorth: which ornament the night by the darkeneſſe thereof dooth hinder: nay it perſwadeth ſometimes, that it is rather an obſcure valley then a garden, and yet doth it ſtil remaine the ſame: it is then the cleereneſſe of the day that maketh it ſhew faire and ioyfull. Euen the very ſame may be ſaid of riches: For if a man who is iſſued of noble bloud & high diſcent, wanteth them, it wholy darkneth the ſunſhine of his nobilitie: whence it proceedeth that hee is no more accounted noble, but one of the vulgar ſort. We will then affirme, that riches neceſſarilie are the cauſe of all ornament of nobilitie.

And

And this needeth not to ſeeme ſtraunge vnto you, for experience (from whence wee take all this aſſurance) may make vs full certaine thereof: For if wee conſider all thoſe that are borne of any worthy family (and as I am greeued to thinke thereon) ſurely wee ſhall finde manie of them, who are conſtrained to maintaine life and ſoule togither (as they ſay) to plough the ground, or otherwiſe forced thorough contemptible pouertie, to ſerue other men, or els to auoid miſerie, againſt their willes to take ſome other vnfit calling vpon them. And any man may of himſelfe iudge the generall occaſion, of ſo inſupportable a miſchiefe, which proceedeth from no other cauſe then for want of riches. But this euill ſhould ſeeme but a ſmall moment, if it were not cauſe of a farre greater: Seeing that from thence doth ſpring blemiſh in bloud, diminiſhing of renowne, increaſe of infamie, a generall diſhonor of a mans houſe, and finally not only loſſe of Nobilitie, but therewithall of life it ſelfe. Who wil afterwards preſume anie more to call ſuch a one by the title of a gentleman? Such a one I ſay, who for want of wealth and riches, hath derogated from Nobilitie, in vſing ſome baſe trade and vocation? But what ſhall I ſay more, he becommeth thereby in the end the fable of the world, and as a miſerable wretch, is pointed at by the common ſort, and made a laughing ſtocke. Doth it ſeeme vnto thee *Fabricio*, that theſe thinges are worthy to be accompted of? ſurely no, but they are rather to be preferred before a mans owne life. And this I onely ſpeake in that which concerneth the commoditie of priuate perſons: but what ſhall I ſay of generall or publicke eſtates? wherof we ſee at this day ſo many goe to ruine, for there are verie few commonwealthes, or communalties, as we do terme them, which do not for want of that which is

neceſſarie, ſincke to the ground on euery ſide. Howe manie Palaces, howe many Churches, howe manie Cities, doe there dayly fall to the ground, as ruinous, which becauſe the eſtate of men cannot ſuſtaine them, cannot be vpheld? What ſhall I ſay of this king, or of that Prince, who being not of abilitie to reſiſt the force of the enemie that aſſayleth them, for want of ſupply of money, do leeſe their kingdomes, their powers, and their crowne? you ſhould not heare of ſo manie ouerthrowes, you ſhould not ſee ſo many ſlaughters: neyther ſhoulde you round about you feele ſo manie cruell actes, if they did abound in wealth: you may then henceforth iudge, whether riches be an ornament, and part of Nobilitie, or not? And like as when they faile, they are cauſe of great inconueniences (yea of more then I haue this day acquainted you withal) So likewiſe where they abound, they doe bring with them honour, and glory: For therof firſt of all doth ariſe a glorie farre exceeding al other, as that which proceedeth of liberalitie, which likewiſe giueth as great renowne and honour to a gentleman, as can poſſiblie be ſpoken of. And who is ſo ignorant that knoweth not, ỳ without wealth ſuch a glorie of liberalitie, cannot ſhew forth it ſelfe, as doth iſſue there-from? Surely all men may wel perceiue it. Doe not the ancient ſtocke and families, conſerue themſelues in their nobilitie, by meanes of riches? doth not the nobilitie of ỳ man extend it ſelfe the more, who doth liberally giue helpe to his friends, or to any other that hath need of ſuccour? doth not their nobilitie increaſe, with their lordlike garments, their great & rich banquets, their great number of ſeruauntes, their faire horſes, their pleaſant gardens, and ſuch other thinges? Thou canſt not deny this *Fabricio*. Now tell me what man is he that can eaſily effect theſe thinges, if he want wealth?

wealth? Surely it is a thing not to be beleeued. Riches do driue all sadnes and sorrow from the mind: they expell all melancholie thoughtes from the imagination: they keepe the bodie from wearisome labour: they increase sweete friendship: they cause in man waighters of honor and renowne, and finally they are the occasion of all high fame and glorie. Who is he then so void of reason, who hearing these things so conformable vnto trueth, doth not iudge riches, not onely to be an ornament of Nobilitie, but an inseparable part thereof? Which thing you may the better consider, by that which experience teacheth, seeing that no man can mount vp to anie degree of vertue, or nobilitie, but riches must open the gap, and make the way. Who will denie, but that it had been impossible for so manie noble men and knights, as we daily see, to haue made any entry to vertu & nobility, but by their riches, much lesse to haue euer come either to ẏ end, or midst thereof? O how many fine wits, & men of great vnderstanding haue there been, & are yet in the world, who employing their whole study in matters belōging to their house (which they would not haue done, but haue take another course, if they had wherwithal to maintain thē selues) who haue ended their liues miserably, whereas nature had made them apt, & fit, to learn some worthy vertue! If then riches are the beginning, & the middle of euerie laudable action, as I haue plainly made demonstration: it followeth necessarily, that this nobility which is conioyned with wealth, is ẏ soueraigne good, & consequently that he who is indued with this nobilitie, is chiefly noble: now *Fabricio*, as I haue shewed heeretofore, being depriued heereof, his Nobilitie whatsoeuer it is, is lame and faultie, and consequently, is not true nor absolute. But I will not nowe further enlarge my speech on his subiect, least in the

end I ſhould ſeeme troubleſome vnto you: in aſmuch as it is a matter more then manifeſt, that riches doe ſtead a man more in nobilitie, then I am able to ſpeake of. Wherefore in few wordes to end my diſcourſe, and bring it to the laſt concluſion, it may clearely appeare vnto you, that true and perfit nobilitie doth conſiſt in bloud, and riches: which ſeeing it is ſo, as I haue with no leſſe ſtrong then true reaſons prooued a great while: it followeth that I am true, and prefectly noble, as one in whom, all thoſe partes are ſufficiently aſſembled, and conſequently the ring giuen, doth belong vnto me, as to the moſt noble.

Poſsidonio hauing ſpoken in this maner, turned himſelfe towardes *Nennio*, proceeding farther in this wiſe.

Thou canſt not, *Nennio*, be of any other opinion: for thou knoweſt well what is fit to be done, and haſt alwaies been pleaſed to followe the ſteps of a iuſt Iudge, albeit there needed not a man of that wiſedome to decide this queſtion (if any doubt ought to be made therof) being of it ſelfe moſt apparant, and out of all doubt: for it had been an eaſie matter for a man of a ſlender capacitie, to decide this controuerſie, eſpecially hauing vnderſtoode ſo manie reaſons as haue been alleadged by me. Amongſt the which (that I may now come to a finall concluſion) I remember yet this one; I conſider her eſtate from whom this variance did ariſe, to be noble, as is not vnknowne vnto you: I weigh likewiſe, that her gift is pretious, rich, and worthy a noble man. Finally, I regard the wordes ſhee vttered in giuing it; her will being, that in remembrance of her, the moſt noble of vs two ſhould poſſeſſe it. What occaſion ſhould mooue her to giue it vnto the moſt Noble? Surely no other, but that ſhee was honourable,

and

and the preſent likewiſe fit for a perſon honourable: I being then deſcended of a moſt noble ſtocke, and hauing all the partes which are required in a perfect noble man, and the ſame qualities being in her, it remaimaineth, that the rich iewell be giuen vnto me, and not to him who is not worthy of ſuch a preſent. What contentment ſhould ſhe receiue, being a ladie of great honour, if one that were inferiour to her in calling, ſhould remember her? Truely none at all; becauſe her will (agreeable vnto reaſon) was that ſhe ſhuld be had in remembrance of a man of worth and of honor. Let *Fabricio* then leaue the purſuite thereof, and not ſuffer any more wordes to be made of the matter, nor ſtay (if he regard his credite) vntill ſentence be giuen: for I doe certainly aſſure you, that if the gratious, and gentle ladie *Virginia*, had giuen the ring vnto the moſt vnworthy, as ſhee gaue it to the moſt noble of vs both (which was neuer her intent) I would without any contradiction haue yeelded it vnto him, and without anie maner of queſtion with mine owne hands, would haue hanged the ſame about his necke. Let him not then be obſtinate, or opiniatiue, to debate the matter when there is no cauſe, eſpeciallie when nothing els then detriment, and ſhame can redound thereof. I will nowe *Nennio*, make an end of my ſpeech, and leaue the matter wholly in your handes, being certaine that you will determine thereof in ſuch ſort, as ſhalbe conformable vnto Iuſtice, and that you will in no wiſe oppoſe your ſelfe againſt the will of the noble ladie.

Here *Poſsidonio* ended his diſcourſe, which he continued all the while the ſunne did ſhew vpon the earth, vntill the euening: Wherefore wee being riſen from our places, with a generall conſent we referred *Fabricio*

his diſcourſe vntill the next day, both becauſe time woulde not haue ſufficed, and it would likewiſe haue been ouer troubleſome vnto vs, by reaſon of *Poſsidonio* his long ſpeech.

Thuswe cõming forth of ỹ garden, ſome of the yong gentlemen and ladies, did highly commend that which *Poſsidonio* had related vnto vs. But whether he had ſpoken wel or no, we being entred into the houſe, our horſes (according to our dayly cuſtome) were preſently made readie. And we being mounted on them, two of our ſeruantes amongſt ỹ reſt, went along with vs: of the which one of them led two grayhoundes, and two braches in his hand, and the other carried a faulcon: as we were vpon the way, we had not rid paſt a mile, before we had viewe of a young pheſant which did flie ſomewhat aloft: At the which letting the faulkon flie, extending her winges in the ayre, ſhe wrought ſo high a pitch, ỹ you would haue thought ſhe had touched ỹ skie, and as ſhe made her point to ſtoupe, her head towardes the earth, and her traine towardes the skie, the pheſant tooke a thicke hedge for couert, which was the cauſe that the faulcon leeſing the ſight thereof, ſeemed as it were aſhamed thereat. Immediatly one of the young men, let flie another faulcon, which hee carried on his fiſt, hauing firſt ſprung the pheſant from her couert, which as one afraid had not made any great flight, but the faulcon preſently ſeized on it. In the meane time whileſt we continued this hawking, the two grayhoundes, which followed vs were let run at two hares, and as we gallopped after, they being ſpent, yeelded to the mercie of the dogges. Wherefore comming to their ſuccour, as well contented with our prey, we returned home, becauſe ſupper time drew neere.

After that wee had a little taken breath, wee ſet our ſelues

ſelues to ſupper with great delight, vnder the freſh ſhadowe: which being ended, the garden being faire, delightfull, and pleaſant, there was not one of vs that was minded to depart from thence. Wherfore, ſome of vs being riſen from the table, went to ſport our ſelues in the allies: Others ſitting ſtill, plaied at cheſſe, and at tables, ſo long as they were permitted by day light. Afterwards, we ſate all togither on the thin graſſe, which was verie coole, paſsing the time in pleaſant and merrie talke, vntil it ſeemed a fit houre to go to bed. Wherfore euerie one riſing, went to take his ordinarie reſt.


BRITISH
MUSEUM

The ſecond Booke.



He ancient Poets by their fables doe ſette down, that Iupiter being at the mariage of Peleus inuited all the Gods and goddeſſes thither, except *Eris* the goddeſſe of diſcord; whereat ſhe being greeuouſly offended, with great induſtrie ſhe framed ý golden apple, and diſdainfullie threw it on the table, where *Pallas, Iuno, and Venus* were ſet, round about the which was written, Let this braue and rich apple be giuen to the faireſt. From hence (becauſe each of the goddeſſes did deeme her ſelfe, to be both faire and gracious) did ariſe a ſudden quarrell. *Iupiter* would not determine which of them ſhould haue this guift, the one being both his ſiſter and his wife, the other two his daughters: but ſent them to receiue their iudgement of *Paris* the ſonne of *Priam*, who to the end he might giue a right ſentence, gaue commandement that they ſhould ſeuerally the one after the other, preſent themſelues naked before him. *Pallas* ſhewing hir ſelfe, promiſed him that if hee did iudge that ſhe was the faireſt; ſhe would make him the onely famous man for learning in the world: *Iuno*, the moſt rich: and *Venus* offered him the enioying of the faireſt ladie in the world: in regard of which promiſe,

he gaue hir the golden apple, from whence afterwards did proceed the deſtruction of Troy.

Now let vs conſider what fruit may be gathered by the ſhadowe of fables, eſpecially of this which I euen now recited. For indeed vnder thoſe vailes we may receiue no leſſe pleaſant then profitable inſtruction. For ſomuch as by this fiction, the Poets doe meane this, that in the procreation of man, the celeſtiall bodies do meet togither, and according to their diuers powers, doe diuerſly bring forth ſundry effectes in our bodies. Into the which diſcord doth not enter, leaſt the bodie alreadie created ſhould wholie periſh.

Howbeit after that man is once framed, and that he hath attained to that age, that hee beginneth nowe to diſcourſe within himſelfe, what kinde of life hee were beſt to followe as the moſt noble in account amongſt men: whether that which is grounded vppon knowledge, which the Philoſophers were wont to cal a contemplatiue kind of life: or otherwiſe, ẏ which guideth a man that addicteth himſelf only to worldly matters, which they tearme actiue: or elſe that which conſiſteth wholy in pleaſure, which they name delightfull. Then ſtraightvvaie diſcord entreth: of which three ſortes of liues, Soueraine Iupiter will not giue ſentence which is the beſt, leaſt that in approuing the one, he ſhould condemne the other two; and ſo the life of man ſhould rather be conſtrained then free, but hee leaueth them to the iudgement of man, to the end that he may as pleaſeth him, tie himſelfe to that kind of life that ſhall beſt like him; it may be, ſhewing vs thereby, the free choice which is granted to vs by him. Of the which notvvithſtanding he that is caried away to follow the delightfull kind of life, doth bring vnto him ſelfe vnſpeakeable detriment. If then a man in his young yeares, did enter into

to consideration of these three maner of liues, and by reason did discourse which of them were the most noble, and did tie himselfe thereto: I doubt not, in that small number of yeares we haue to liue, but we should take a farre better course, and that the life of mortall men should be more pleasing & accepted before God, and more setled and prosperous for men: wheras now we see the greater part, to sinke and drowne themselues, making choice of that which is worst.

For if we enter into a generall consideration of all men liuing, truelie we shall finde the number of those to be verie small, who followe the contemplatiue life, as more noble then the other; but verye manie who with an ardent desire do embrace, either the actiue, or delightful: which two are so much lesse worthy then the other as the body is lesse noble then the minde. Of which two partes nature hath framed man, the one being subiect to corruption, the other eternallie dureable.

These kind of men see not (as hauing their invvard eies vailed) how much more worthy desert it is, to follovve those thinges that are incorruptible, then in vain to labour after the pleasure of the flesh, which is but (as it were) of a daies continuance. For vvhich cause, the custome of those that liue in that sort, is greatly to bee blamed, seeing that man doth wholie take delight in those thinges (as if it vvere a naturall matter) which bring him intollerable losse, albeit at the first shevv they seeme pleasant and delightfull to the body.

VVhich opinion *Possidonio* did wholy leane vnto yesterday, for grounding himselfe vppon those two kinds of life, he did sufficiently set forth the svveetnesse that is felte in them. But *Fabricio*, farre differing from him in iudgement, vvill this daye endeuour him-

himſelfe to ſhevv, that the contratie therof is the troth, as he who followving a contemplatiue kind of life, doth hold this as moſt certaine, that true and perfect nobilitie, doth conſiſt in the vertues of the minde. But to the ende that I ſeeme not my ſelfe, to ſpeake that for him, which he determineth to relate, I intend hencefoorth to giue place to his ovvne words.

Euery ſtarre was now hidden in the skie, fearing the cleere light which the ſunne did more and more ſpread vpon the earth, vvhen as vve being riſen to exerciſe our bodies, we mounted on horſebacke to take the freſhe ayre, and as our diſcourſe led vs from one matter to another, in the end we perceiued that vve had rid further then we determined: wherefore turning back, wee paſed ſoftly homevvards; where the tables were couered for dinner: and after wee had firſt walked a turn or two in the garden, in the end we placed our ſelues at the table: and after that wee had ſatisfied hunger, and ſate a while, we marched to that place where *Poſsidonio* diſcourſed the day before, to heare what *Fabricio* had this day to ſpeake for himſelfe, who beeing freſh and luſtie hauing called vs al together, we compaſſed him round about. And when he perceiued we vvere all in a readineſſe, and that we were ſilent, he gaue with great courage, this beginning vnto his ſpeech.

Moſt worthy gentlemen, Silence ſhould (in my opinion) hereafter better become me, if I would regarde the words which *Poſsidonio* vttered yeſterday, both at the beginning and likewiſe at the end of his long genealogie; or elſe it were beſt for me to ſeeke ſome matter more doubtfull then that hee diſcourſed of. Which I vvould willingly doe, if he had made ſhew of his ovvne Nobilitie, and not other mens: or ſpoken of any thing elſe, then of the greatneſſe of his ſtatelie palaces, and of

the

the aboundance of his great wealth. Wherefore to the end I may declare vnto you, how far forth theſe things make for Nobilitie; nay rather howe farre they are oppoſite, and cleane contrarie thereunto: I had not need to be dumbe to day: but I will rather ſpeake that (without paſsing the limited bounds) which ſhall come firſt into my thought, and I ſhall iudge to be true: and, as I thinke, I ſhal perchance open thoſe thinges vnto you, which it may be, were neuer vttered by any other, concerning true, and perfect Nobilitie.

Now our queſtion being ſtrange, and no man (as I beleeue) hauing ſo perfectlie diſcourſed thereof, I hope you will giue attentiue eare vnto me: which if you doe (as I doubt not but you will) ſtrength will ſettle in my heart, from the which my minde will take incouragement, my memory become conſtant, my wil more readie, & my voice more apt to ſpeake.

The cleerneſſe of *Poſsidonio* his bloud (worthy gentlemen) is ſo great, by that which hee hath in many words long debated, that conſidering vvhich is ỹ moſt noble of vs tvvo, there is no doubt, but he is more worthy than my ſelfe, and that our controuerſie, is rather ſuperfluous, then neceſſary. But forſomuch as vndoubtedlie I hold the queſtion to be ſuperfluous and out of doubt, as this is, vvhether a reſonable creature be more noble then a brute beaſt; or a man, more noble & more perfect then God: I will not forbeare to declare vnto you hovv weake his vveapons are, and to ſhevve you plainly the ſlightneſſe of his words, that you may know by degrees, into vvhat manifeſt error he is vnaduiſedlie fallen. Wherefore it lying vppon me this daie to perſuade you, that true and perfect Nobilitie in man conſiſteth not in bloud (for it ſhould bee a meere follie to thinke it, much more to ſpeake it) but in the mind, and

conſequentlie that this nobilitie which conſiſteth in me, becauſe it proceedeth from the minde, is true and perfect; it were firſt expedient for me to alleadge ſome of my reaſons, and afterwardes in anſwering his arguments, to rid my ſelfe cleane from them. But you ſhal holde me excuſed if I take a contrary courſe, for vpon good ground I wil firſt of all begin with the laſt, that I may the ſooner diſpatch the matter, and afterwards by ſound argumentes ſtrengthen my ſide the more.

Poſsidonio yeſterday, by the concluſion of his diſcourſe intended, that true and perfect nobilitie is deriued from bloud, and riches, and for the ſure grounding of this his concluſion, in arguing he let fly many dartes and arrowes, with which he had thought to haue giuen me my deathes wound: but ſurely they were all ſo weake, that with one onely blovv (if ſo it vvere that I intended not particularlie to anſwere to euerie point) you ſhall ſee the fal preſentlie to ỹ ground: yea ſome of them will ſharpely pierce himſelfe, as by his firſt argument I will manifeſtly proue vnto you.

For in the verie entry of his diſcourſe, hee going about to ſhew what this Nobilitie is; he affirmed, that that was true nobilitie, which is left by the auncеſtors to the ſucceſſours: and going about to prooue that hee was noble, hee ſaide, that his predeceſſours had beene braue and valiant men at Armes, and vvell thought of, of the kinges whom they had ſerued: but I hearde no word that they themſelues were deſcended of any noble ſtocke (whereby if you doe well weigh the matter) you may perceiue the vncertainty of his ſpeech: forſomuch as he did then affirme, the nobility of his auncеſtors to conſiſt, not in bloud as hee ſaid, but in actes of magnanimitie, and in vertue, which is eaſie to bee credited, as that which proceedeth from the vertues of the

mind.

mind. I ſay it is a fooliſh thinge to hold, that nobilitie is left vs by our anceſtors, for if that were true, it ſhould neceſſarilie followe, either that we ſhould be all noble, or elſe not one at all; ſeeing that in perfect nobilitie, if we ought to haue conſideration of bloud, as thou ſaieſt *Poſsidonio*, we ſhall ſurely finde (if we doe not flie from the true opinion of Naturaliſtes, and doe giue credit to that which is approued) that one man onely vvas the common predeceſſor of all men which haue bin born, vntill this day, and are hereafter to come into ỹ vvorld, whoſe name vvas Adam.

I reaſon then thus (if ſo be that thy opinion dooth hold any thing of the troth) that if Adam was noble, why then vve are all noble, as all they ſhal bee likevviſe who are to come into the world: but if hee were ignoble, and baſe, we are ſo likewiſe, and ſo by conſequent, I am in like eſtate of nobilitie, or baſeneſſe of birth, as thou art. For euen as the paine of his offence, vvhich was death, extendeth it ſelfe euen vnto vs, and ſhall likewiſe ſtretch to as many as euer ſhall be borne hereafter; euen ſo in like manner, his nobilitie, or baſeneſſe, ought to extend it ſelfe to all his poſteritie. Dooſt thou thinke *Poſsidonio* that this is a good conſequent? Surely I beleeue ſo.

Wherefore novv thou mayſt perceiue, how much nature, whereon yeſterday thou diddeſt ground thy ſelf for the moſt part, dooth make for this thy nobilitie; in aſmuch as it hath brought vs al into the world after one ſort, and there is no diſtinction at all in nature; whereof (if I doe call it to minde before I haue ended my diſcourſe) I will ſpeake ſomewhat, but now let vs proceed further.

How true is this other reaſon, that nobilitie is leſte as an hereditarie guift? Surely, when as I do enter

into imagination of ſuch fooliſh toyes, I cannot holde my ſelfe from laughter. For who is there amongſt you that did euer ſee, that Nobilitie was lefte by will vnto mens children, as though it were framed of ſome materiall thing, which might by the laſt teſtament be left vnto them, as riches are, which is ſurely a ridiculous thing? Neither is it of that qualitie as other thinges are, which albeit they be not palpable, yet are they left vnto vs as hereditarie: and ſurely thou mayeſt ſeeke long enough in thy grandfathers willes, before thou ſhouldeſt be able to finde any ſuch Nobilitie left thee by any of them.

Of what power this thy other argument (wherin ỹ intendeſt, that no better inſtrument, nor more perfect meanes is giuen vs by nature, by which the nobility of man is long conſerued, then children and ſuch as doe deſcend of them) is ſufficiently manifeſt of it ſelfe. For if that did proceed according vnto troth: why diddeſt thou then ſet the two *Scipios* as an example vnto vs? vvhat is novv become of their poſteritie? where are their ſucceſſors? Surely they are already cleane worne out.

But forſomuch as their nobilitie did not conſiſt in bloud, but in the vertues of the minde, therefore their glorious worthineſſe and lawdable renowme is not dead, nor will euer be extinguiſhed in their poſterity. Hovv many are there who are dead without children, vvhoſe glory and renowne dooth neuertheleſſe liue vntill this day? I cannot reckon vp the great number of them. We ought not then to conſider in true Nobilitie, as thou ſayſt, eyther the predeceſſors or ſucceſſors, but only the vertue of man, vvhich cauſeth him to liue eternally, as we may wel ſay of the *Scipios*, & other worthy emperors.

Now

Now in proceeding farther, thou wenteſt about to prooue, that in conſidering the operations of Nature, that like as the bloud is infuſed in the birth of children, euen ſo is nobilitie. Of what waight that is, I leaue thee to conſider, as a matter that hath not trueth in it: from whence that which hath been ſaid alreadie, may be againe auerred, to wit, that wee being all deſcended of *Adam* our firſt father, if his bloud was noble, this his nobilitie was by him infuſed into al his children, and ſo from hand to hand into all his poſteritie. Thou diddeſt adde hereunto, that we doe not only regard the bloud, but the countenances and lineaments of the parentes in their children.

In trueth I cannot imagine to what purpoſe thou doeſt vtter ſo many wordes in vaine. For albeit this be true, that the verie countenance and lineaments of the aunceſtors remaine with their poſteritie: doth that prooue their Nobilitie, and greatneſſe of courage? No truely: For it conſiſteth in the vertues of the mind, whither the ſight of our outward eies cannot pierce, and not in the lineamentes of the bodie, except you will ſay that one member is more noble then the other, which queſtion at this time we are not to diſpute of. Thou wenteſt about to make vs beleeue likewiſe, that not onely the members, but euen the maners, and the proweſſe of parentes, moſt commonly is transfuſed into the children. Surely *Poſsidonio*, I affirme that thoſe are noble, who doe follow the good partes, and generoſitie of their anceſtors, as the *Scipios* did, which may ſerue as the onely example in the world for vertue and value. But we doe not eſteeme thoſe to be noble, who deſcending of true and perfit nobl'e men, doe leade a looſe and wicked life: As afterwards the ſonne of *Scipio* of *Afrique* did: who for his diſſolute liuing,

being in ỹ field called, *Campus Martius*, with his white gowne, al ſpotted with vices, to demand the Pretorſhip of the people: he had neuer obtained it, had it not been thorow the fauour of *Cicereus* in times paſt, his fathers Chauncellor: Albeit that afterwardes his parents conſidering, that they might reape diſhonour and reproch thereby, they laid a blocke in his way, that hee neuer attained to any ſuch dignitie, and did forcibly take the ring from his finger, wherein his fathers picture was ingrauen, deeming him vnworthy, to be partaker of his fathers glorie, and Nobilite: ſo that afterwardes he was accompted amongſt men ignoble. What honour was the ſon of *Q. Fab.* the great, worthie of, from whom *Q. Pompeius* (becauſe he liued a ruffian like life) tooke away the libertie to ſpend his own goods freely? Surely none at all. It ſtoode him in no ſteede, that his father had beene the generall of the Romaine armies.

What Nobilitie did the ſonne of *Clodius* deſerue, who giuing himſelf ouer to the loue of a common woman, leade his life in that ſorte, that hee was worthy of all ſhame, and diſhonour? The auncient Nobilitie of his father, was of no importance vnto him. Now thou mayſt ſee *Poſsidonio*, how well thou knoweſt what power cõſiſteth in bloud, touching ỹ nobilitie of man, which that ỹ mighteſt exalt vnto the skies, thou wert not aſhamed to compare it, with the Nobilitie of horſes, dogges, and other thinges. You may nowe perceiue gentlemen what a wonderfull thing *Poſsidonio* his Nobilitie is, ſeeing that it is equall to the Nobilitie of beaſtes.

Diddeſt thou thinke *Poſsidonio*, therewithall to get the victorie of me? Are theſe the ſtrong weapons, aguinſt the which no force coulde preuaile, as thou

diddeſt

diddeſt make vs beleeue ? Truely amongſt dogges we doe not ſeeke out the moſt noble, but the beſt and moſt valorous : and ſo likewiſe of horſes and other things, as (agreeable to the matter) thou diddeſt reckon vp. Then their Nobilitie, doth not conſiſt in ſeede as thou ſaieſt, but in the goodneſſe and worthineſſe of them.

Fabricio gathered his ſtrength togither, as if he had been carefull howe hee ſhould haue proceeded, when as the Ladie *Laura*, who had with great attention marked his words, addreſſing her ſpeech vnto him, ſaid after this maner.

I woulde vvillingly vnderſtand *Fabricio*, howe thou wilt aunſwere that whiche hee affirmed, that the thing ingendred according vnto Nature, doth not onely receiue of the ingenderer, his eſſence or being, but his qualities in like ſorte, and all that which followeth the eſſence, concluding thereby that a Noble man cannot ingender anie thing elſe then an Honourable perſonage, whiche I did denie.

I will not Madame (quoth *Fabricio*) make anie other aunſwere thereto, then that which was alleadged by you, to wit, that this qualitie, to become Noble, may eyther be, or not be : and it followeth not of neceſsitie, if the father be a Noble man, that the ſonne be likewiſe Noble.

Yea but (quoth the Ladie *Laura*) hee replied I knowe not what, by which it ſeemed vnto mee, that that which I had affirmed, could hardly be concluded.

Yes right well (quoth *Fabricio*) For albeit he argued, that like as white, or blacke is transfuſed into the chil-

dren, euen ſo is Nobilitie. I ſaie that his ſimilitude is not worth a ruſhe: In aſmuch as blackneſſe, or whiteneſſe, are demonſtratiue diſpoſitions of the body; but Nobilitie is a hidden propertie of the minde, in regard ỳ it proceedeth of vertue: So that a painter may by arte eaſily alter either the whiteneſſe or blackneſſe of man: but he can neuer paint forth with his penſill, the nobilitie of the minde, as being a thing not ſubiect vnto the ſight of bodily eyes. Like as it happeneth with fire, the flames whereof may well be drawne, but the heate can not in any wiſe be painted. Wherefore I ſay, it is no good concluſiõ, that what ſo giueth the eſſence, or being, giueth likewiſe that which followeth the eſſence, which holdeth true concerning the diſpoſition of the bodie, but not of the qualities of the minde. Do we not ſee commonly diuers parentes, who for the moſt part doe ingender children, of the which ſome one prooueth apt to learne vertue, and to be inſtructed in good maners, and another prone to followe all maner of vice? you ſee then *Madame*, what diuerſities doe proceede of theſe reſemblances, which were well vnderſtoode by you maiſter *Iohn Franciſco*. Wherefore this tale that you inſerted in the middeſt of *Poſsidonio* his diſcourſe, ought to breede no woonder: For albeit it happen in ſome women, as you gaue vs yeſterday to vnderſtand, you may find the clean contrary in others. And whereas the birth of *Romulus*, and *Remus* cannot be hidden: I ſay M. *Dominico*, that their value, and vertue did manifeſt their Nobilitie, and not the temper of their bodies. You may nowe Madame diſcouer his follies, which thou thy ſelfe *Poſsidonio* couldeſt not diſcerne, when as thou wenteſt about to perſwade vs, that man doth receiue from the ingenderer the qualities of the minde. But what great follie is this? wherefore

diddeſt

diddeſt thou not as well affirme, that a holy perſonage, or a man well ſeene in naturall cauſes, or experienced in Diuinitie, could not ingender any other, then a ſainct, a good Naturaliſte, or a diuine; all which are qualities conſiſting in the minde? Which if it ſhoulde come to paſſe, the worlde ſhould be well repleniſhed with holineſſe, with wiſedome, with experience, and thou ſhouldeſt then be one of that number. But as that cannot happen, ſo likewiſe I ſay, that it cannot follow, that one noble man, doth engender a noble childe, nobilitie being a qualitie of the minde, euen as wiſedom, experience, and other vertues of like ſorte are. And nowe how canſt thou haue the heart to expect the victorie, concerning the controuerſie in queſtion, ſeeing I haue ſhewed by degrees, thy manifeſt errours?

But let vs yet proceede to thy other reaſons, againſt which I need not take any ſtronger weapons, they being as weake as the other I haue ouerthrowne. Albeit that this ſeemeth to carrie ſome force with it, which we ſee is commonly vſed in all partes of the world, that ſuch as are borne of noble parents, are ſo held: if thou haddeſt ſpoken otherwiſe, and ſaid in ſteede of this, they are Noble men, they are in deede called ſo, it had not been amiſſe. For it is true, and it cannot any waies bee denied, that whoſoeuer is deſcended of Noble bloud, wee call him a Noble man; but generallie I denie this to containe a trueth.

Tell me I pray thee, if he that is borne of a chriſtian, be ſtraightwaies a chriſtian? Surely no. But euen as it is not onely neceſſary for him that intendeth to be a right and true Chriſtian, that by birth hee doe deſcend of chriſtian parentes, but likewiſe that hee receiue baptiſme, and keep the Commandements of Chriſt:

So it is not sufficient for a noble man, to come of Noble bloud, as a thing that maketh little or nothing in matter of Nobilitie: but that he obserue that which is requisite for the attaining of perfit Nobilitie, to wit, that hee become Noble thorough the vertues of the minde. Besides that, I might adde hereunto, that this thy consideration is farre from the purpose, in asmuch as the prize was not giuen to him that shoulde onelie beare the name, but to him that should in effect be the most noble of vs two.

Albeit that thou mightest reply hereunto *Possidonio*, as thou hast alreadie affirmed, that if they that descend of Noble men were not noble, then they should not enioy the same priuiledges that Noble men doe. Whereunto I woulde aunswere, that the bad custome of men, therein is much to be blamed: Forasmuch as they doe not imploy their discourse to that, whereby the trueth may be made manifest, but onelie giuing credite to the bare name, they do argue in such maner: So that if we turne our back to the trueth, and giue our minds to follow the lying opinion of the rude vulgar sorte, which for the most part, doe fall into great errors, thy saying then shall be true. Thou seest now *Possidonio*, of what force thy argumentes are.

But I will passe ouer to the rest, and come vnto that, by which thou diddest seeke to prooue, that if the infamie of a man, be sufficient to blemish his whole stocke, that the glorie and worthinesse therof ought by great reason, extend it selfe to all his posteritie: whereupon thou diddest consequently inferre that thy aunceſtors being noble, thou must needes be so. Although that this reason seeme apparent; yet in answering therunto, I might say (and therewithall if I list not perticularly to passe thorow the rest of the reasons, resist whatsoeuer thou

thou haſt alleadged) that we do not now debate of the Nobilitie of our anceſtors, but we are to prooue which of vs two is the moſt noble, and ſo by conſequent ſhew what our nobilitie is, & not ſet forth the honor of other men. And herein I will yeeld vnto thee, that if we were both equall in Nobilitie of the minde, that perhaps in regard of the antiquitie of thy predeceſſors, ỹ mighteſt be more noble then my ſelfe.

But iudge nowe what theſe high praiſes, and commendations of thy predeceſſors doe auaile thee, and to what great purpoſe they were yeſterday alleaged by thee? For thou diddeſt with no leſſe readineſſe, dexteritie, and good grace recount them, then they who from the top of ſome high towre doe with a loud voice tell the wonderful miracles of auncient holy fathers, or from ſome ſcaffold in the market place recite out of the old *Romanes*, the cruell warres of the Giantes, or the furious loue of ſome *Orlando*. But to let that paſſe, how well this thy glorious ſpeech did become thee, I will proceed to this argument, where thou diddeſt ſay, that like as the honour of the ſonne, did extend to the father, much more did the fathers glorie ſtretch vnto his children. It is true *Poſsidonio*, yet it followeth not, that if the ſonne by his owne vertues be made noble, that the father is anie way partaker thereof, or made noble thereby: For if the ſonne were verie expert in feates of armes, or skilfull in matter of learning, ſurely hee ſhould want his ſenſes that woulde affirme, that the father did participate eyther in the experience of the arte Militarie, or in Science with his Sonne, they both beeing giftes of the minde, wherein as I haue often times ſayde, true and perfit Nobilitie conſiſteth: from the whiche, it can verie hardlie bee transferred from one bodie to an other, euen as

thou diddeſt vainly perſwade thy ſelfe. Theſe are thy ſophiſticate reaſons *Poſsidonio*, which being reſiſted by the trueth, thou maieſt perceiue what force they are of.

Fabricio hauing hitherunto continued his ſpeech, he pawſed a while, and afterwardes proceeded in this maner.

Worthy Gent. M. P*eter* *Anthonie* knowing as well as my ſelfe the ſlenderneſſe of *Poſsidonio* his argumentes, which he heaped the one on the others head, he could not withhold from taking part with him, and amongſt other things to alleadge this reaſon in his behalfe: that foraſmuch as amongſt the lawes of the *Romains*, there was one, which commanded ỹ the image of euery worthy knight, ſhoulde be made and ſet in ſome publicke place, which in feſting maner, they did with great iolitie viſite. We may argue, and ſay, that if the *Romaines* did owe ſuch honour vnto images, much more was due vnto the liuing children, becauſe they were but an imitation of nature, whereas nature her ſelfe was apparent in the children. Now if this your reaſon (M. P*eter* *Anthonie*) had as much force in it, as it ſheweth; I doubt not but it would appale me, and giue ſo great courage vnto *Poſsidonio*, that you might eaſilie perſuade him, he were wel worthy to haue one of theſe images erected for him. And although that I ſhoulde frame no other anſwere therunto, then I did to the laſt, yet ſhuld I be ſtill vpon a ſure ground. Neuertheleſſe, I wil vſe ſuch reaſons in diſproofe therof, as I did to ỹ former. For if thou ſaieſt that their children whoſe images are erected to ỹ common view of al men, do participat with their fathers vertues; then I do affirm that thy allegation is true: but if therein they differ, then this their nobilitie, and reputation is not transferred to them.

So

So likewiſe if the children of thoſe who were repreſented by thoſe images, had beene worthy of ſuch honour, ſurely the Romanes, who wanted no good counſell, would willinglie haue granted it: it followeth then that the honour was not done to the image, whether it were of Marble, or mettall, but to the vvorthy memorie of his vertues, whoſe lineaments the image did liuely ſet forth, which could not be wel executed in ŷ perſon of their child, being made in regard of their ovvne proper vertue, and not in reſpect of any thing belõging to another.

Beſides that, there are and haue beene diuers perſons, who being deſcended of valorous and vvorthie parentes, haue vvith ſhame darkened their brightneſſe, as we haue already affirmed. And had it bin reaſonable that the wiſe Romans, ſhould haue honoured thoſe in ſuch a manner, in regard of their aunceſtors? Surely no. And what wouldeſt thou ſay *Poſidonio*, if theſe men ſhould lauiſhlie recken vp the worthy deeds of their predeceſſors, or if they ſhould publikely ſhevv their images? wouldſt thou indeed iudge them to bee noblemen? God forbid, nay ſo much more baſe ought they to be deemed, that they hauing before their eyes the troden pathes, which doe manifeſtly ſhewe them the waie to become noble, they take a cleane contrarie courſe.

What doth then the worthineſſe of bloud preuaile, when as it is obſcured by diſhoneſt conditions? And vvhat annoyance dooth the baſeneſſe of bloud bring, when it is honoured by noble vertues? Surely, none at all. For in perfect nobilitie, the obſcureneſſe, or worthineſſe of bloud is not to be conſidered. But let vs proceed further: thou diddeſt enter into the gouernment of cities, and the adminiſtration of diuine offices, ſaying

that they were noble: if I knew that this thy argument made any thing to the purpose, I would willinglie answer it, as I haue doone the rest; but I will say nothing herein, but that thou thy selfe vnderstandest not, what thou diddest say: for let vs yeeld it to be true; what doth followe thereof? Art thou I pray thee any of those gouernours? Thou seest *Possidonio*, how easilie thy strong reasons are resisted.

And art thou ignorant, that many men ostentimes doe come to the degree of a Cardinall, or of a bishop, who haue no great store of gold in their cofers? In former age there vvas no regard had, neither of bloud, as thou wouldest haue it, nor of gold or siluer, but vnto a man adorned with vertue, whose life deserued praise. As it fell out on a time in the Consistorie of Cardinals, whoe beeing assembled in the Conclaue, to chuse a newe Pope in his roome that was dead, tvvo were in election to be preferred to that dignitie, the one of them being descended of royall bloud, the other of a meane familie. Many of the Cardinals, in regarde of the noble descent of the one, would aduance him vnto the popedome: and many in respect of the deserts and holie life of the other, desired to place him in that high estate, the one company of Cardinals opposing themselues against the other.

The latter alleadging, that they sought to establish and create the successour of Peter, a Preacher, the son of a Smith, not the sonne of *Cesar Augustus*. In the end, they hauing no respect to the worthines of bloud, but to the perfection of both their liues, the last for his Soueraigne vertues (they contemning the great nobilitie of the other) attained to the popedome.

Moyses did the like, who might haue left his children the principalitie and dignitie, but he made choice

of

of *Ioſua*, vvho was not of his bloud, to denote and ſignifie thereby, that it is not bloud, but the life of man that is to be conſidered therein. Of which opinion amongſt others, was the Emperour *Elius*, who would not permit, that his ſonne ſhould bee choſen Emperour after him: ſaying that the Empire did demaunde a manne worthie thereof, and not bloud. Vertue then, and not nobilitie of bloud, maketh a man of deſert. How manie Popes haue there beene, who haue not beene of any noble ſtocke, but iſſued of verie poore parentes: as *Felix* the thirde, whoſe father was a prieſt of a baſe linage: *Gelaſius*, *Agapites*, *Theodorus*, *Siluerius*, and many others attained vnto the Popedome, albeit they were deſcended of a baſe ſtocke. Yet was not their bloud ſo obſcure, but their vertue of as great woorth, which made them merite ſo high a dignitie. And there hath not beene onelie Popes borne of verie meane parentes, but likewiſe kinges and Emperors, and other valiant captaines.

Tullius Hoſtilius was borne of lovve degree, who in his young yeares was a ſhepheard, and was afterwards aduaunced to the gouernement of the Romaine Empire, and vvas the third king of the Romaines. *Tarquinius Priſcus* was the ſonne of *Demaratus*, a marchant baniſhed out of Corinth his natiue Countrie, & notwithſtanding he became the fift king of the Romans.

Seruius Tullius, who was borne in moſt baſe eſtate of ſeruitude, was the ſixt king of the Romaines. *Dioclesian Dalmat.* borne in *Salone*, of a poore ſtocke, became Emperor of Rome. Likwiſe *Maximinus* the emperour, borne in *Thracia*, did deſcend of very meane parents. *Martius Rutilius* was by bloud a Plebeian (that is one of the common people) and yet created Conſull fiue times, he triumphed ouer the *Faliſqui*.

Cornelius

Cornelius Coſſus was alſo by birth a Plebeian, hee manfullie killed *Laertes Tolomeus* duke of the *Fidenati*, whoſe riches and ſpoiles he conſecrated to Iupiter *Feretrian* at Rome, obtaining therein the ſecond place, he triũphed alſo ouer many nations. *Gneius Flauius*, his father was a bondman, and yet he was created Pretor at Rome. *Terentius Varro*, and *M. Perpennus Conſuls*, *Lucius Volumnus*, and *Mamercus Dictators*. 2. *Publius Philon*, *Pretor*, all theſe did ſpring of meane parentes. But their apparant vertue, and ſingular value vvas ſo great, that thereby they gaue great ayde vnto the Romaine common wealth.

The Soueraigne Orator *Demoſthenes* amongſt the Grecians, was borne of one by occupation a Cutler, ſcarce knowne amongſt men: And *Euripides* that moſt famous Poet, his mother was an hearbe wife. *Socrates* who was by the iudgement of *Apollo*, the wiſeſt man in the vvorld, drevv his beginning from a Maſon. *Xenophon* was borne in *Archeas*, a village by *Athens*, of one *Grillus* of baſe eſtate. But the obſcureneſſe of their bloud, and of infinite others which I might rehearſe vnto you, haue lightened the world, and exalted their name euen to the skies. Of the vvhich ſome of them by force of Armes, others by vertue of the mind, are become famous and honourable. You may by this well diſcerne, if a Plebeian, or one borne of baſe eſtate, may ariſe to great nobilitie and renovvne, and iudge, whether the nobilitie of bloud, or the vertue of the mind be required in thoſe that beare publike offices.

Here maiſter *Iohn Franciſco*, not permitting *Fabricio* to paſſe any further, ſaid vnto him after this maner. I doe not thinke *Fabricio*, that that which thou haſt anſwered vnto *Poſsidonio* his two former arguments, doth wholie confute them; ſeeing that hee did not ground himſelfe

himselfe in such extremitie, as it seemeth thou takest it: for if the vertues of children didde equall their fathers perfections, they should likewise deserue to haue images erected for them, not if they were altogither vnequall and contrarie vnto them, which neither he, nor I, did make any doubt of, as thou didst affirme of the sons of *Q. Fabius*, and of *Claudius*, which was no part of our meaning. Neither shouldest thou consider these two so great extreamities, but take the meane betweene them, and then perhaps we may vnderstand the troth of that which he said, to wit, that they ỹ do descend of noble men, ought to be had in great estimation, & consequently be partakers of the nobilitie of their parents: whereby he meant (and that not indirectly) to inferre, that for the remembrance of their aunceſtors, the gouernment of Cities and diuine offices, were deseruedlie bestowed vpon them. And although that a bishop or any other, be well stored with gold, doe not wee see them oftentimes likewise descended of a noble house? Maister *Iohn Frãciſco* paused here, when as *Fabricio* answered immediatly.

I denie not, but that in such manner of men of the middle sort, there is some part of nobilitie or reputation, which proceedeth from their aunceſtors, but I intending to proue, what true and perfect nobilitie vvas, that vvhich I affirmed vnto you may bee well concluded: for these of the middle sort thou talkest of, are not true and perfect noble men, but such as doe represent the nobilitie of others: and what difference there is betweene that which is troth, and that which doth onlie represent it, there is none of you but may easilie vnderstand.

As touching the other point wherin thou saist, that ỹ most part of bishops & cardinals, are of noble descent:

You know right welmaister *Iohn Franciſco*, that the ſonne of God made no ſcruple, to chuſe S. *Peter* who was come but of meane parentage, and himſelfe a ſimple fiſher: Neither did he of his infinite goodneſſe diſdain to receiue into the apoſtleſhip men of baſe eſtate, as moſt part of the apoſtles were, who were worthy of heauenly grace, as a reward of their holie life, and conſtant faith. To how many miſerable men, to how many poore ſoules, to how many beggers, hath the ſonne of God vouchſafed to giue the kingdom of heauen? Trulie honour of bloud, is not conſidered therein, but Nobilitie of maners, and pureneſſe of faith: for vvith God we are all equal, and there is no difference of perſons before him, but in aſmuch as one excelleth another in goodneſſe, and aſwell the noble man as the begger ſhal be iudged, whether he be righteous or a ſinner.

It is then the life of man, adorned with good conditions, and with loyall faith, which doth conioin vs with God; and a depraued life which doth ſeparate vs from him, and not the nobilitie of bloud, or the worthines of our progenitors. Wherefore if you reſt ſatisfied herewith, I will with your good leaue returne to my former enterpriſe.

You haue thorowly ſatisfied me (quoth maiſter *Iohn Franciſco*) and therefore you may hold on your courſe, and take what leiſure you liſt:

Fabricio, gaue this further entrance into his diſcourſe. If my memorie ſerue me well *Poſsidonio*, vnto thy former reaſons thou diddeſt adde, that with popes, emperors and kinges, he which is of noble bloud taketh the chiefe place, and is honoured more then others. Suppoſe the caſe that this were true, as it is not, yet art not thou any of them. But where doſt thou finde, that he which is borne of noble bloud, hath ſuch preheminēces?

Trulie

Truely there is no ſuch matter. Surely the Church of Chriſt, ſhould ſhine maruellouſly, if it were onelie lightened with the beams of noble men, & empires ſhuld be well maintained, and kingdomes become better, if they were gouerned by their counſell. Thou art deceiued *Poſsidonio*, for I ſay not, if men of noble bloud, but ſuch as are excellent in vertue, & experienced in knowledge, did depart and leaue the ſeruice of princes, there would be no gouernment at all. Who do rule, who do manage, who doe maintain the world, but wiſe men, and ſuch as are indued with wiſdome, whether they be noble by bloud, or of meane birth? Theſe haue ỹ chiefeſt places, theſe men are honoured, and not men nobly borne, void of vertue, and depriued of knowledge.

Now doe I returne to you maiſter *Dominico*, who to ſtrengthen *Poſsidonio* his weake ſide with a ſubtil maner of argumẽt, you reaſoned, that if this nobility of bloud, was ſo highly eſteemed of the ſon of God, man incarnate here on earth, in aſmuch as he was borne of the virgin Mary, who deſcended of the royall ſtocke of K. Dauid, how much more ought it to be affected, & reuerenced of vs: I am certain that you haue no ſuch beleefe, as hee which knovveth the troth, as well as the beſt of vs; but did you not alledge that which came into your minde in fauour of *Poſsidonio*, rather to anger the lady *Camilla*, who did ſtill threaten you, that you might be put to ſilence, then in any intention you had to gainesay me? I verilie beleeue it.

And in troth likewiſe, if I were onely to ſatisfie you, I vvould paſſe it ouer with ſilence, as a matter ſuperfluous: but becauſe I intend to confirme *Poſsidonio* his beleefe, and theſe Ladies, I ſay that the Lord of heauen, did not chooſe the virgine Mary to be his mother, only bicauſe ſhee was borne of the royall ſtocke of King

Dauid, but in regard of the Soueraigne excellencie of hir vertues, of her humilitie, and patience.

For what Lady was there euer so graced of God, as to be saluted by the spirit of an Angell, and called ful of grace, blessed, and exalted aboue all other women, except the most glorious virgine Mary? which she may thanke her humilitie and pureneſſe of heart for, and not her nobilitie onely. You may see then, that the nobility of Mary was not considered of God, but her humilitie and sinceritie of spirit. You did afterwards Maister *Dominico* following on your matter, tel vs the manifest folly of *Herode Ascalonita*, wherunto I neede not answere any thing else, but that some madnes entred into his minde, in such sorte to execute his fooliſh fantasie. What shal I say vnto you concerning the temeritie of *Equitius*, and the presumption of others, alledaged by you, who being descended of base bloud, did seeke to ennoble themselues in the worthy families of other men? Surely if you consider their end, you shall finde, that they receiued condigne punishment for their fooliſh conceit, some of them being banished, others dying in prison, others hanged, as a recompence of their vnaduised enterprise. Wherfore we ought not to sette their follies before vs as examples to followe. Besides, they sought not how to ennoble themselues, as you affirme, but to succeed in the kingdome & patrimonie of those, whose succeſſours coulourably they pretended themselues to be. But why did you not bring him for an example, who was more familiar with god then any other mortal man, who did not vaunt himselfe, that he was descended of the bloud royal, but did deny that he was born of Pharao his daughter; desiring rather to be persecuted, as one of the people of God, then to take vpon him the glory of the royall bloud, and to possesse the riches of Egypt? And

And *Gordius* the father of *Midas*, who is reported to be the richeſt king that euer was, who from the eſtate of a husbandman, became king of *Phrigia*, & between the limites of the leſſer, and the greater *Aſia*, built a Citie called *Gordium*, where he conſecrated a temple to *Iupiter*, in the which not being aſhamed of his obſcure birth, neither forgetting his baſe calling, he offered the plough ſharde, which manie times hee had tilled the ground withall, and the harneis hee was woont to couple his oxen togither to the yoke, to the end that in all ages it might be manifeſt to all men, what vocation he had been of: Such examples ought in deed to be recommended vnto vs, & not thoſe recited by you.

How weake then (worthy Gent.) the reaſons are, that *Poſsidonio* yeſterday with many wordes ſet forth, you may alreadie partly iudge: as I will better approoue vnto you by the ſequele of my diſcourſe. Foraſmuch as ſpeaking of Nobilitie, he was forced to deſcend vnto vertue, whence true and perfit Nobilitie is deriued, whereof he diſcourſed I know not what, but hee made ſuch large flightes a farre off, as the firſt Faulcon did yeſternight about the pheſant: the reaſon was, becauſe he perceiued that the cleere light therof did ouermuch bleare his eies. Wherefore, like as the warrier, who finding himſelfe ouermatched with weapons, which he cannot weild, leaueth them to take others, which he may manage with greater facilitie: Euen ſo fell it out yeſterday with *Poſsidonio*: For hauing armed himſelfe with vertue, and knowing not how to vſe it, he had his ſodaine recourſe vnto riches, hee skirmiſhed ſo liuely with them, that he hath not onely thereby made himſelfe more nob'e then I am, but then any other man likewiſe. But now I being come to prooue what force thoſe weapons haue, I doubt not but I ſhall make it

manifeſt, that they are farre more weake, and of leſſe defence then the other.

He grounded himſelfe vpon two propoſitions, the one was, that a learned and vertuous man, hath no nobilitie in him (as if that learning ſerued to no purpoſe, to make a man noble) if he want ſuch riches as are required to be in a gent. becauſe they are no leſſe neceſſarie in nobilitie then bloud is. The other was, that declaring what goodes were, hee forced himſelfe to prooue that they were riches.

Nowe before I enter into the firſt propoſition, I will make manifeſt vnto you, what trueth is in the laſt, to the end you afterwardes may with more eaſe know the veritie of the other. Thou wouldeſt then *Poſsidonio*, haue riches to be goods, thou deceiueſt thy ſelfe greatly: for if they were goodes, they would cauſe the man that poſſeſſeth them to become better, and more perfit then he is; for ſuch is the propertie of that which is good: but riches doe not effect this: For if theſe certaine goodes, did make a man more perfect, wee muſt of neceſsitie conclude, that man ſhould be leſſe perfect, then the thing by which he is made more perfit, which if thou graunteſt for true, it ſhoulde followe, that gold, ſiluer, pretious ſtones, trees, and other liuing creatures depriued of reaſon (for theſe thinges, and ſuch like are riches) ſhould be more perfect, and more Noble then man, which ſhould be too great a follie to think, much more to vtter. We will then conclude, that riches are no goodes.

Moreouer, it is a matter verie euident, that of a good thing can nothing followe but that which is good: but of theſe thy riches, what good may euer inſue? Nay rather all venemous branches doe ſpring from that root: They are not then good, but the cauſe of all euill.

Which

Which may euidently be ſeene by the vnbrideled deſire *Marcus Craſſus* did beare vnto riches, which was the cauſe that he robbed the temple of Ieruſalem, and not only of his owne death, but of *Marcus* his ſon, and ỹ ruine of the *Romaine* armei. For he being choſen Conſul by the *Romaines* againſt the *Parthians*, and conducting the army, he came into the Prouince of *Iudea*, and being at Ieruſalem, hee tooke from the holie temple of *Salomon* 8000. talentes of gold, and tooke away a golden beame, which amounted to the waight of 300. pound, to the which the pretious vailes of the temple ſhining with a wonderfull beautie, and incredible arte, were hanged: and to be ſhort, he tooke al the ornamentes which were of any value. Hee paſsing with this pray into *Parthia*, beeing more bent to pillage, & to heape vp gold, then to ouercome the enemies, in the end was driuen to that neceſſitie, that with ſmall adoe, he was the cauſe of his ſons death, and the diſcomfiture of the armie: the *Romaines* being then ſore beaten, and villanouſly murthered by that people, his owne head, & his right hand, was cut off, & preſented to *Herod* king of the *Parthians*, who in aſmuch as in his life time he had ſo much bin affected to the loue of gold, to the end that after his death hee might glut himſelfe therwith, *Herod* cauſed gold to be melted, & poured into his mouth. Likewiſe the riches of *Ptolomy* king of *Cypres*, were cauſe of his death: For hee vnderſtanding that the Romaines were determined to bring his kingdom into the forme of a Prouince, & take poſſeſsion of his great treaſor, he thought to drown thē in the ſea, rather then they ſhuld come into the hands of his enemies: but his mind being buried in his treaſor, ỹ miſerable wretch could not indure to ſee them loſt in ỹ ſort, but rather made choiſe (after that *Cato Portius*

was

was to that end ſent into *Cypres* by the Senate) to take away his own life by poyſon, then to drown his wealth in the ſea: So that it cannot be denied but that riches are the cauſe of all euill: For beſides the miſchiefe I haue alreadie recited that commeth by the greedie deſire of them: we ſee (which my tongue hath horror to tell) that the father is the murtherer of his ſonne, the brother of the brother, and one friend of another. I wil not to this purpoſe alleadge thee any examples, either out of auncient, or moderne hiſtories, being a thing that thou mayſt now a dayes heare out of the mouth of euery man, and a matter ſo manifeſt, that euery where we haue tidinges thereof. Men doe on all ſides ſet vpon eche other, and are in warre continually for this pelfe.

We ſee in euerie place, abhominable treaſons, and conſpiracies, to attaine vnto riches. This is not all that may be ſaid thereof, but much more: for the rich man is alwaies in feare, that being purſued by ſome enuious perſon, he be not at ſometime, or other murthered. If he eate, he feareth poiſon: if he walke abroad, terror attendeth on him: he quaketh at the name of warre: he ſtandeth in dread of water, of aire, of fire: and to conclude, he is neuer without feare. And this happeneth, becauſe he knoweth, that riches vaniſh away as lightly as the ſmoke before the winde, what ſhall I ſay more?

The rich man is alwaies a thirſt, with an vnquenchable drought, as hee that is tormented with a quotidian ague. For if he be wealthy, he coueteth ſtill to poſſeſſe more: ſo ỹ the whole world cannot ſuffice to glut his greedie deſire. Who is then ſo vnaduiſed to terme ſuch a one rich, who (miſerable man) is no otherwiſe tormented then *Tantalus*, who ſitting in the middeſt of freſh and cleere running ſtreames, ſeeth moſt pleaſant and

and delightfull fruite rounde about him, and his heart burning to eate and drinke of them, and yet hee cannot.

God forbid that ſuch a one ſhould be called rich, but rather poore and needie aboue all other men. Surely if riches were ſo neceſſarie, the wiſe *Athenians* woulde neuer haue decreed, and ordained for a law, that whoſoeuer became rich within their Citie, ſhoulde for ten yeares ſpace be baniſhed *Athens*, eſteeming it to be farre more profitable to voide the Citie of ſuch perſons, then to let them remaine there. The *Athenians* knew well what infections, riches doe bring with them: which was the cauſe that as ſome plague, they baniſhed them out of *Athens*. Now thou ſeeſt *Poſsidonio*, what good theſe thy goodes doe bring.

Fabricio, proceeded in like maner to the handling of his other argumentes; when as M. *Peter Anthony*, as it were taking the word out of his mouth, ſaide thus vnto him.

Truely *Fabricio*, that which thou haſt ſpoken of riches, hath brought me into a great doubt: For hearing what thou haſt diſcourſed therof, on the one ſide it ſeemeth vnto me to be true: and yet on the other ſide, I am perſwaded it is not wholly ſo. Foraſmuch as euerie day, and in all places, the moſt part of mortall men do, ſome after one maner, ſome after another, giue themſelues to the getting of gold and ſiluer: yea not onelie the baſe and vulgar ſort, but likewiſe men of great credite, and reputation, old and yong men, and thoſe that are moſt wiſe in worldly matters. Others careleſſe of their owne life, doe indeuour to enrich themſelues, vpon the ſenceleſſe waters of the ſea, and doe daily ſcoure the coaſts of the Eaſt countries, the ſhores of the weſt parts, and from North to South, and South to North,

and leaue no place vntouched, where they may inrich themselues: Others to that purpose doe follow bloudy battels; and some men doe manfully labour both night and day to get wealth. These men in woodes, & mountaines, those in vallies and plaines: Others seek to come by riches by dangerous robberies: Others by diuelish vsurie. Wherefore if as thou sayst, riches were cause of so great euill, surely no man that loueth his welfare, would against his will purchase his owne bane, with so many cares, and intollerable disquiet. So that I seeing so strong reasons on both sides, it is hard for mee, nay a thing impossible to bolte out the trueth.

It is an easie matter to resolue this thy doubt, (aunswered *Fabricio*,) For auncient authours haue left vs in writing, that riches (whosoeuer first had the sight thereof) is a thing most deformed, wearing on the naturall visage thereof, a masque of most fine gold, denoting thereby, that it is faire in apparence, but foule within: wherefore they who trauell so many Countries, and take such paines to seeke it, are enamoured with the outward shewe, which blindeth the eyes of the vnderstanding: so that they can hardly discerne how hurtfull the inward deformitie thereof is. Which maketh man who is forgetfull of himselfe, to addict his minde thereto. Which *Paulus Emilius* perceiuing, when he ouercame *Perseus* king of *Macedonia*, and gloriously triumphed ouer him; hee did not onely forbeare to touche the infinite treasure of the king, but likewise to see it, although he might haue been possessor of a wonderfull bootie.

Pompey the great hauing taken by force the temple of Ierusalem, whereof I lately made mention, found there an inestimable treasure, and did not onely abstaine from taking the spoile thereof, as *Marcus Crassus*

ſus did afterwardes, but alſo from touching it, as hee which knew well what hurt riches did bring. And hee who before-hand knoweth the ſecrets of man, as hee who made them, that by the apparent beauty of riches, man would eaſily contemne true and eternall treaſure, hath often put vs in minde, in his infallible doctrine, that here on earth man ſhoulde not heape vp riches, as a corruptible thing, and ſubiect to a thouſand hazardes.

M. *Peter Anthonie* knew not well what to reply to his anſwere, which pleaſed him aboue meaſure, ſhewing that he was thoroughly ſatiſfied therewith. Wherfore *Fabricio*, following on his diſcourſe proceeded in this maner.

Gentlemen, beſides that riches are goodes, *Poſsidonio* would haue them conioyned to Nobilitie by ſuch neceſsitie, that if anie noble man whatſoeuer were depriued thereof, hee ſhould no more be accompted noble amongſt men. His meaning is then, that ſo long as a noble man enioyeth wealth, he ſhall be honourable, and afterwards be of baſe accompt: O fooliſh opinion and deceitful beliefe! Doeſt not thou conſider *Poſsidonio*, that this thy Nobilitie is light as the winde, and dependeth of Fortune, euen as hee who being on the maine ſea, hath loſt both ſterne, and ſaile togither at a clappe?

Foraſmuchas if thoſe ſmall nũber of ſouldiers which are now left to guard the towne, did ſpoile thy treaſure: ſurely thou ſhouldeſt in one inſtant, leeſe both thy wealth, and thy nobility. And as often as this were true, that riches did make a man noble: it ſhould neceſſarily follow, that an vſurer or a theefe beeing borne a gentleman, ſhoulde become more Noble then he was before, by meanes of his ſubſtance, which he ſhould gaine

vnlawfully, which howe farre it diſagreeth from the trueth, I need not further to manifeſt vnto you. This is the great glorie which riches bringeth to Nobilitie; of the which *Poſsidonio*, thou wouldeſt that liberalitie ſhould proceede, wherein thou art as much deceiued, as in that which hath alreadie been ſpoken of, becauſe true liberalitie ſpringeth not from riches, but from the loue of the minde. Which *Philip* of *Macedonia* (that I may not further inlarge my diſcourſe, to perſwade you therein) did manifeſtly prooue, when hee ſeeing *Alexander* his ſonne ouerlauiſhe to certaine Princes of his kingdome, whoſe loue hee ſought to winne vnto him by liberall giftes, in aduiſing him like a father, he wrote vnto him, that hee ought not to hope for anie faithfulneſſe in thoſe friendes, who are purchaſed by preſentes, which when we want to ſend, then doe they faile vs likewiſe: but that hee ought to gratifie them with loue, and ſinceritie of heart, wherein true liberalitie conſiſteth. This king was well acquainted, of what efficacie liberalitie which proceedeth from riches, was. Thou ſeeſt then *Poſsidonio*, that the Nobilitie which yeſterday thou diddeſt affirme to bee true and perfite, is nowe fraile, vaine, and none at all. I ſay then, that it is neither the ſtately pallaces, nor pleaſant gardens, nor fertill fields, nor well faſhioned apparell, nor aboundance of golde or ſiluer, as thinges which haue no ſtabilitie in them, which doe make a man Noble, but vertue whiche ſhineth in the minde.

There doth the perfection of nobility remaine: there the bright glorie of man doth giue light. Nay let warres ſpring amongſt mightie Potentates, let floudes of waters fall from heauen; let the riuers and the Sea both togither ſwell; let the fire bee kindled in theſe riches

riches which thou calleſt goods: for all this, this kind of Nobilitie will neuer ſhrink, nor become leſſe, becauſe it is incorruptible; which the philoſopher, no leſſe repleniſhed with nobilitie, then wiſdome, may eaſilie perſwade thee; I meane *Bias*, who ſeeing *Priene* his country vtterly brought to ruine, and many bearing away their ſubſtance from thence, and hee being asked why he did not carrie part of his goods with him, aunſwered; I alwaies carie all my riches with me: and trulie he did charge his mind, not his ſhoulders with them as others doe, and his wealth was not diſcerned with the eies of the body, but with the eies of his mind.

But nowe that I haue ſufficiently anſwered the reaſons which thou diddeſt alleadge in the behalfe of riches: for by this which I haue ſaid, thou mayſt imagine how they make for thee; now I ſay it ſhall not be from the purpoſe, if I return to the other propoſition, which I left vnſpoken of; to wit, that in a learned and vertuous man, there can bee no nobilitie, if hee want riches which are required in a gentleman; bicauſe that learning is of it ſelfe vaine to ennoble any man.

What *Poſsidonio*, doſt thou affirme that learning is a vain thing in nobilitie, and that ſcience and knowledge are vaine? Dooeſt thou holde that that is vaine which doth infuſe the true light into nobilitie? O wonderfull vndiſcreetneſſe, ful of meere follie! O moſt erroneous opinion worthy of all blame! But why doe I ſo much maruell, if a blind man cannot diſcerne the right waie? Well, thou ſhalt before we depart from hence wel perceiue, what force learning and knowledge are of, in nobilitie. And truely if they had not beene worthy great eſtimation, Philip the Macedonian king, whoſe force and power was knowne to all Greece, woulde not ſo ſoone as he had a ſonne borne, haue written to *Ariſto-*

tle the onely learned and wise philosopher, in that sort he did. *Knowe thou Aristotle, that I haue a sonne born vnto me, for the which I render immortal thanks vnto the Gods, not so much for that he is borne, as because his birth hath happened in the daies of thy life, for asmuch as I hope that being instructed, and trained vppe by thee, hee will proue a worthy successour of vs and our kingdome.* Weigh with thy selfe how the mind of a good prince vvas full of ioy, because his sonne was borne in his time, whose knovvledge and learning, did not onely with the sound thereof fill all the worlde, but euen pierce the cloudes. He being a good father did desire to adorn his son with learning and science, as treasures of far more inestimable value, then his nobilitie; his kingdome and riches were, the greatnesse and the Nobilitie of his Sonne, when as *Alexander* the Great was scarcely borne vnto him.

And *Alexander* himselfe hauing vnderstood, that *Aristotle* his maister had published his vvorks abroad, especiallie those which did intreat of naturall causes, he was much offended therewith, and saide; Wherin shall we excel other men, if those Sciences wherof we make profession, are common to euery man? Surely I had rather passe other men in learning, & knowledge, then in riches, and in Lordly dominion. O vvordes most worthy of so great a Prince, who preferred knowledge before all things in the world.

This was hee, vvho going from Corinth to visit the Philosopher *Diogenes* in his tubbe, enuyed his glorie, saying vnto him, that if he had not beene *Alexander*, he vvould haue desired to haue beene *Diogenes*: and that not bicause of the worthinesse of his Nobilitie, but in regard of his great learning and wisedome; vvhich would neuer haue happened that *Alexander* shoulde haue

haue desired, being not that which he was, but to haue beene *Diogenes*.

You may now see what power learning is of *Possidonio*; what force the Sciences haue: for if *Alexander* the great, the ruler of all the East part of the world, did so much loue and affect them, as I haue giuen you to vnderstand, it is not to be beleeued that they are vaine in the ennobling of man. And *Paulus Emilius* hauing ouercome *Perseus*, king of *Macedonia*, as I lately tolde you, took only out of all his treasure, two bookes, to instruct his children withal: thereby likewise you may perceiue, how farre greater the estimation of learning then of riches is, and whether they bring not greater glory to a noble man then it dooth. Whereby thou mayest vnderstand, that in arguing vainely yesterdaie thou diddest alleadge such things as were not worthie the recitall.

But I will not (gentlemen) particularly call to minde euery seueral argument, which hee heaped togither. For he might alledge many more, which notwithstanding by the answeres I haue already made, woulde bee soone ouerthrown, as reasons nothing at al sauoring of troth. Tel me *Possidonio*, doost thou indeed iudge thy weapons to be of as great force as thou didst beleeue? Alas, how foolish is this thy opinion, and thy self more sottish if thou yet remaine therein.

VVel, I hope by this resistance that I haue made, ỹ I haue hitherunto satisfied you in euery point.

Yea but (qd the lady *Laura*) with a feminine readines: where haue you forgot that which he saide, when as he granted (if my memory serue me wel) that thou wert likewise a man of honor, but in regard that his nobilitie is more ancient than thine, he is to be iudged to be ỹ most noble. Thou must not leaue that behind thee.

You

thee; for methought hee ſpake very aptly to the purpoſe, concerning that matter.

You doe wel Madame, to put mee in minde of that (quoth *Fabricio*) which had cleane ſlipt out of my remembrance. And I maruell not though his ſpeech did pleaſe you, bicauſe women cannot ſo vvel diſcouer the falſhood of arguments. For albeit that his propoſition were true, that of tvvo equall thinges concurring togither in one ſubiect, the moſt ancient ought to bee preferred: yet notwithſtanding it ſhall haue no preheminence, if the nobility of both iſſue out of one fountain. But what ſhall we ſay, if the one ſpring of a more perfect and worthy obiect then the other? Shal we deeme it more noble, onely bicauſe it is more ancient? Trulie no, Madam.

The like ought to be conſidered in vs two, for albeit that he be deſcended of a more ancient and noble familie, we ought to haue regard vnto that which is moſt proper to perfect nobilitie. As we may plainlie ſee in thoſe two images, which are there before you, and are wonderfull pleaſing to the ſight of thoſe that beholde them; yet dooth the one drawe a kinde of deſire more then the other, becauſe it is made more approching vnto life, wherein the excellencie and perfection of them doth conſiſt, although the other be of greater antiquitie. Novv the nobility of the mind deſcending of a far more excellent and noble obiect (as before we depart from hence I will ſhew you) then the nobilitie of bloud: we ought not then to haue recourſe vnto the antiquity, but to the perfection and excellencie therof. Doe you now thinke Madam, that *Poſsidonio* did ſpeak ſo well as you beleeued? But dooth not that which I haue anſwered thorowlie content you? Surely I am in good hope it doth. But this your gentle remembrāce,

put-

putteth me in mind of that which *Posſidonio* did handle afterwards; when as he ſaid, that in aſmuch as nature is more perfect than art, his nobilitie being naturall, and mine artificiall, he concluded his nobilitie to be more worthy and more perfect, and conſequently, that hee was the more noble.

But *Poſsidonio*, like as thy other arguments were all diſagreeing from the troth, euen ſo is this. For ſuppoſe the caſe that nature bee more perfect then art, it followeth not that thy concluſion is true: forſomuch as nature hauing equally framed vs all, ſhee faſhioned the minde of man pure and cleane equally in all men: but like as a white paper is apt at the firſt, to receiue the impreſſion of whatſoeuer thou wilt write therin, if thou filleſt the ſame with vertuous and good works, then it is good and precious; if with bad and vicious, then is it hurtfull and nothing worth: Euen ſo the mind of man, is apt by nature to receiue either vertue, or vice: if thou traine it vp in vertue, it will become vertuous and Noble; but if thou diſpoſe it to vice, dooeſt thou thinke it will euer become noble, albeit it deſcend of a Noble ſtocke? No ſurely. Thus then we doe giue the price of nobilitie, not vnto nature but vnto art; and ſo thy nature ſhal not be more perfect then my induſtry, as thou diddeſt conclude.

Thou diddeſt perſwade thy ſelfe *Poſsidonio*, that I ſhould want breath: but doſt not thou perceiue, hovv thy brags yeſterday, are to day ouerthrovvne, ſo that thou haſt no more to ſay.

Now it is apparant vnto you all how great *Poſsidonio* his follies are, and of all other that doe follow his erroneous opinion, vvho deeming themſelues noble by bloud, and hauing no notable vertue to commende

themſelues, do fill their bodies with winde, feed their mind with ſmoke, and fly higher in the ayre then euer *Icarus* did, for ſurely in their countenances is ſeen nothing elſe, but winde, ſmoke, and light matters, by the which they are in no wiſe to be accounted true & perfect noble men.

By this I well perceiue, that thou haſt no other arguments to maintaine thy nobility, ſeeing that to finiſh and end thy diſcourſe, thou diddeſt ſo lauiſhly brag of the great wealth and riches: which indeed ſeem no leſſe then the name *Poſsidonio* doth import; for in my iudgement it ſignifieth nothing elſe, then to be poſſeſſour of all. Thou didſt run out at randon, in extolling thy braue and ſtately pallaces, thy faire and pleaſant gardens, thy fieldes, thy flocks of beaſts, thy ſumptuous bankets, thy pompe, thy chiualrie, and a thouſand other vaunts, which did not onely make thee worthy of ſo ſmal a ring, as that we are at variance for, but of a roiall crowne. O extreame ſottiſhnes of men, which liue at this day! The beſt is, that thou art not the only man, that art thus perſwaded of thy ſelfe; for it may be thou art the leaſt of that opinion of ſuch as are ſouldiors of that band. Euery where there are ſuch fooles, who inioy no other contentment in this world, then to reckon vp their noble deſcent, who builde caſtles in the ayre, and ſeeke to bee commended for that which they neither haue, nor deſerue: they exalt themſelues with their own mouth, euen to the skies, feeding themſelues with a vaine name, taking little thought of the ſubſtance and effect.

But in aſmuch as this great wealth, which thou diddeſt ſo ſtand vppon, maketh no more to thy purpoſe, then if thou haddeſt reckoned vp the riches of *Midas*,

or

or of *Marcus Craſſus*, leauing them now behind mee, and ſayling ouer this thy windy and ſwelling ſea, it is now high time, that I frame my courſe in a calmer vvater. Vpon the which ſetting forward with more leiſure, I will paſſe on my nauigation ſo farre, as I ſhall thinke expedient.

Worthy gentlemen, if we doe conſider that which hath beene ſpoken this day, we ſhall finde that *Poſsidonio* yeſterday preached vnto vs, not his owne nobilitie, but the honour of his predeceſſours; telling vs of the great combats, the worthy exploits, the trophees, the victories of his great grandfathers, the priuiledges, the ſpoiles, the images, the portraitures, and much other ſuch light ſtuf, which was nothing to our purpoſe. And ſurely it ſeemed vnto mee, that I heard them who are woont in open ſtreets to ſet foorth the praiſes of other men, but to bee able to ſay nothing in their owne commendation. But inſomuch as we haue to conſider, which of vs two is the moſt noble, from henceforth ſetting aſide the nobilitie of our auncеſters, becauſe the ring in queſtion was not giuen vnto him who ſhoulde deriue his nobilitie from moſt ancient predeceſſors, but to the moſt noble of vs two; denoting thereby the proper nobility belonging to our ſelues, and not ỹ vvhich belongeth to other men: It ſeemeth vnto me a thinge very conuenient (for I think for all his weapons I need not fear any danger, but that I may walk whither I liſt) by litle & little, to enter into the fruitful field of vertues & ſciences; and to make it certeinly known vnto you (ỹ true & perfect nobility of man, dooth neither conſiſt in antiquity of bloud, nor in wealth, but in the vertues of the mind) when I ſhall haue alleadged ſuch reaſons as my ſlender capacity, & ỹ ſmal time which is left me, wil

will giue me leaue, albeit that to perſwade you in this point, the reaſones already rehearſed may ſeeme ſufficient.

Whereunto *Fabricio* added ſome other words, and after he had a little taken breath, and called his wits togither as one halfe weary already, he gaue this beginning to his future diſcourſe.

Moſt worthy gentlemen. It was his pleaſure, whoſe will doth moue the heauens, to create and frame all things we ſee in this world, to a certaine and due ende. The ſunne (which for the moſt part doth ſhine vnto vs, and from the which leſſer ſtarres doe take their light) principally to ſhewe vnto vs the magnificence of his glory; and next for the profit of man. Likewiſe he created the earth, the water, the ayre, the fire, and other liuing creatures, for the vſe of man. But man himſelfe was formed for God, that ſoueraign and infinite good and not for any other thing here beneath on earth.

We know alſo by thoſe motions we doe feele in our ſelues, that man is neuer thorowlie contented, albeit he haue vnder his power and dominion, whatſoeuer hee may eſpeciallie wiſh or deſire in this world: for though ſome one delight to haue children, or riches; or great offices, dignities, and honour, and that fortune doe fauor him in al his demands, yet is ŷ deſire of his minde neuer in reſt, but hee ſtill longeth couetouſly more and more, after ſomthing or other, bicauſe there is not here on earth any ſtability, nor the ende of any infinite good.

But man by the intellectual knowledge of his vnderſtanding, gaining the infinite grace and exceſſiue loue of him, who in himſelfe is the infinitie of goodnes, his mortall deſire is ſtaid, & reſteth it ſelfe; like vnto a ſtone

which

which being caſt on high, neuer reſteth vntill it come to the boſome of the earth, which is the laſt end of the reſt thereof. Now I ſay, that he is moſt perfit, and noble, who approcheth neereſt vnto this laſt end. Forasmuch as if I deſire heate, ſurely how much the neerer I ſhall draw neerer vnto the fire, by ſo much ſhall I attain vnto my deſire. Then to ſee who is ỹ moſt noble, & moſt perfit of vs two, wee ought to conſider, which of vs approcheth neereſt vnto the end hee was made for: For without doubt he ſhalbe deemed the moſt noble, and not he who is deſcended of moſt noble bloud. And as you knowe, that no man can attaine vnto any end, but by ſome meanes: The meanes wee haue to come thereunto, is vertue, which hath reſidence in the ſoule, and not in the bodie: and God made the ſoule vnto his likeneſſe, and not the body where it remaineth, which in it ſelfe doth onely reſemble brutiſh beaſtes. If then *Poſsidonio*, thou doeſt inrich this thy body, with apparell, and with wealth, if thou doeſt fill it with daintie fare, and leaueſt thy ſoule without the ornament of vertue, and good conditions: ſurely thou doeſt not adorne thy ſelfe with perfit Nobilitie, as degenerating from the determinate end thereof. For man being framed of body and ſoule, his will ſhall either encline to the body or the minde: If to the bodie, becauſe it was framed of earth, which draweth downwardes, hee cannot comprehend, nor deſire any other thing but terreſtriall, and earthly matters. If to the minde, becauſe it is nothing but a celeſtiall ſpirite, he cannot couet after anie other thing, then to mount on high, where al perfection conſiſteth, and diſdaine fraile thinges which are on the earth.

But man ought to gouerne himſelfe according vnto reaſon, not according as the bodie, but as his ſoule

guideth him; the one being ſubiect vnto corruption, the other made to liue eternally.

Likewiſe, the ornamentes of the ſoule, as that is immortall, euen ſo are they, and thoſe that ſet forth the body are corruptible, as the body is. Foraſmuch as both the internall and externall goodes of the bodie, which conſiſt in a iuſt proportiō of members, in health, in force, in riches, in procreation of children, in building of pallaces, and ſuch other things, are al fraile and tranſitorie, in aſmuch as to day they haue their being, and in a moment are brought to the ground; whereas contrarily, the goods of the ſoule are durable, perpetuall, and eternall. You ſee then howe much the ſoule is farre more perfit and noble then the body. Wherefore, if thou deſireſt to pleaſe the body, and I determine to ſerue and obey the ſoule, I ſhall haue ſo much aduauntage of thee in nobilitie, as the one excelleth the other: as if I ſhould ſay. Thoſe thinges that doe ſet forth the ſoule, are vertues which a man doth irreuocablie poure into his minde, for vertue is a firme abiding affection of the minde, which cauſeth whoſoeuer is poſſeſſed therewith, to deſerue great praiſe. And whenſoeuer it is not conſtant, it looſeth the name of vertue, ſeeing that this ſtabilitie of affection by continuall vſe, and practiſe, is changed into an habitude.

Some of theſe vertues doe conſiſt in good maners and behauiour: others in the vnderſtanding. The former doe conſiſt in a meane, betweene two extreames: the latter, neither in extremitie, nor in a meane: as prudence, ſcience, intelligence, and wiſedome. Other ſome which by auncient writers are called morall vertues, are ſo many appetites, and deſires as come into our minde. For if ſo bee that I am naturally addicted vnto women, or ſome other aboue meaſure deſirous

of

of daintie fare: Or elſe, if when reaſon commandeth, I doe abſtaine from looking on a woman, or that other, from his meate, ſurely both of theſe in vs is a vice. Vertue then conſidering the middle of theſe extreames, with a ſtrong bridle ouerruleth theſe inordinate appetites, which a man can hardly withſtand at the firſt aſſault, becauſe hee cannot ſo well at the firſt temper the naturall motions of the fleſhe, nor refrayne the inſatiable deſire of the belly.

The like I may ſay of diuerſe and ſundrie deſires of man, which cauſe him to fall into abhominable vices. Now if Vertue did not oppoſe it ſelfe againſt vice, I doubt not but our eſtate ſhoulde whollie reſemble, if it were not worſe then the life of beaſtes voide of reaſon.

There are beſides other vices, which man beeing ouertaken withall, perſwading himſelfe they proceede from vertue, hee falleth headlong into them. As if I ſhould extreamely thirſt after honor and dignitie: And thou ſhouldeſt ſhewe thy ſelfe ouer liberall in ſpending thy goods; If this man ſhould raſhly thruſt himſelf into the midſt of a fray. In theſe vnbrideled appetites, albeit they ſeeme good, becauſe that to be placed in honour, to bee liberall, and a man of courage, haue the apparence of good thinges, yet notwithſtanding they are vitious, and ought to bee auoided. Foraſmuch as my deſire leaneth to ambition, thine to prodigalitie: and the raſhe courage of the other, to fooliſh hardineſſe.

Likewiſe who ſo vſeth the contrarie of theſe, is no leſſe worthie of blame; For if I beeing worthy, did diſdainfully refuſe a place of dignitie: Or thou diddeſt withholde thy hand ouer ſtraitely in the diſtribu-

distributing of thy goodes where neede were; and the other being vrged by his enemies, did play the coward: Surely both the former & the latter sort of men, which tie themselues to those extreams, are vitious, and ought to be auoided: as in like maner hee is, who doth either hide, or debarre his companion of those things, which in reason hee may affoord him. Wherefore to moderat this my vnbrideled desire of the flesh, or his vnordinate feeding, there commeth a vertue, named *Temperance*, which by reason doth appease, and ouerrule the vnruly appetites of man. How greatly is *Philoxenes* to be blamed, who being enchanted by the desire of eating, wished aboue all other things, that his neck were as long as the necke of a crane, that he might feed with the more pleasure: and *Semiramis* queene of the Assyrians, who so dissolutely abandoned her selfe vnto the pleasures of the flesh, that beeing depriued of all sence and vnderstanding, shee sought carnally to couple her selfe with her sonne *Ninus*? Surely verie much, as they who in guise of men did liue intemperately like beasts. This vertue doth not onelie temper those delightes, which are common with vs and brute beastes: but it doth likwise appease sorrow, from whence doth spring gratious modestie, inuiolate continencie, moderate sobrietie, honest chastitie, and other good workes.

In like maner to temperate his furious temeritie, who inconsideratly thrusteth himselfe amidst his enemies, or his faintnesse of heart, who beeing assailed by his aduersarie, doth flie from him: Fortitude doth step in place, a worthy vertue, which obtaineth the meane betweene fooliſh-hardinesse, and feare. The rashnesse of *Phaeton* gaue him courage to gouerne his fathers chariot, although he altogither wanted skill thereto: and encouraged *Icarus* to flie in the aire. Which maketh

keth me affirme that the valiaunt man ought to dread no daunger, no not death it ſelfe, nor any other thing when need requireth, hauing due conſideration of the place, the time, and the maner how he enterpriſeth any thing: but he ought to feare that, which if hee ſhoulde not dread, would cauſe him to be contemned, as diſhonour, enuy, the chaſtitie of his wife, and ſuche other thinges, as who ſo feareth is honeſt, and iealous of his reputation. Likewiſe that ought to be feared which paſſeth the force of man, for he is no leſſe worthy of reprehenſion, who dreadeth that which hee ought to feare, then he who feareth that which he ought not to dread. As wee reade of *Artemon* the Grecian, who was ſo fearefull, that he neuer ſtirred not ſo much as out of his houſe, but two of his ſeruauntes continuallie held an yron buckler ouer his head, fearing leaſt ſomething ſhoulde fall vpon him: or if any thing did fall, that hee might be the better defended from it: and if at any time he went abroad, he was carried in a litter wel couered. This vertue then doth cauſe men to expoſe themſelues with conſideration to ſuch dangers as doe happen, and patiently to ſuffer labour and ſorrowe, which is a farre harder matter for a man to doe, then to abſtaine from pleaſure. Heerehence doth ſpring magnificence, which is ſo much commended, tollerable patience, firme perſeuerance, and magnanimitie of courage. But to bridle the euill diſpoſition of him, who after a tyrannical ſorte doth occupie that which by right doth belong vnto another his equall: therein Iuſtice doth offer it ſelfe, which is a vertue farre more excellent then any other, beeing either vniuerſall, or particular.

Vniuerſall iuſtice is that, which within it ſelfe doth containe the two foreſaid vertues, and is farre more

noble then they are, by Iuſtice good lawes are obſerued, which doe diſpoſe men, and make them fit to doe good actions, and vpon deſerued penaltie doe prohibite men from wickedneſſe.

This vertue doth containe the vſe, and habitude of other vertues, wherefore by good reaſon it is called perfect, and vniuerſall, eſpecially inaſmuch as if temperance be good, that ſhall onely bee profitable for him that poſſeſſeth it; and ſo I may ſay likewiſe of Fortitude: but Iuſtice is common, and vniuerſall to al men, and as a vertue deſcended from aboue, it ſhineth as a heauenly light. Particular Iuſtice, no leſſe to be commended then other vertues, conſiſteth in equitie (for we ought in the ſame maner to accompt both of commoditie and diſcommoditie) and in the obſeruation of faith in thinges promiſed. Nowe of this vertue doth proceede the obſeruation of lawes, trueth, pietie, obedience, and likewiſe liberalitie, which holding the middle betweene ſpending and ſauing, doth reſtraine the vice of prodigalitie, and couetouſneſſe: For like as the prodigall man is careleſſe in getting, and lauiſhe in giuing: So the couetous man is ouer carefull in heaping vp riches, and too nigardly in ſpending. Neither is the auaritious man farre vnlike to the miſerable ambitious perſon, betweene whom, and this other who deſpiſeth honour beeing worthy thereof, there commeth a vertue conſidering the meane, of the which ariſeth magnanimitie of courage.

I could bring you infinite examples fitting this purpoſe, which I doe forbeare, leaſt my ſpeach ſhould be ouer long, intending likewiſe to returne to diſcourſe of intellectuall vertues: and firſt of all to ſhewe you, that ſome of the foreſaide morall vertues, cannot be without prudence, which conſiſteth in thoſe thinges, which

are

are ſubiect to chaunge, beeing ſometimes after this faſhion, ſometimes after another: Herehence proceedeth counſell, and election. As for example, if thou ſhouldeſt offer vnto mee manie good thinges, and manie euill thinges, counſelling me, whether of them ſhould be eſpecially, either of the good more profitable, or of the euill thinges more hurtfull: Thorough prudence I woulde make choice of that which were moſt commodious, and leaſt dangerous, thereby ordering thinges preſent, remembring thinges paſt, and foreſeeing thinges to come. On Prudence, reaſon, vnderſtanding, and diſcretion attendeth. Thorough Science, which conſiſteth in firme, and true thinges, wee knowe, and vnderſtand the concluſion, whereunto it aſpireth, leauing the principles to bee conſidered of by intelligence: For in ſearching out, if God be the Soueraigne good, knowing it thorough Science, I ſeeke to vnderſtand what God is. Afterwardes by Wiſedome I comprehend the principles, and that which proceedeth of them: whereof by good right, it is named the true knowledge of diuine and humane thinges.

The vertues of the minde being then the ornament of the ſoule, which is the ſubiect of the ſaide vertues, they are (as I ſaid) the meanes to attaine vnto the end wee ſhoote at. He ſhall be then moſt Noble, hee ſhall be moſt perfite, and amongeſt mortall men moſt renowmed; which being adorned with the vertues I haue recited, ſhall approch neereſt vnto this Soueraigne, and infinite good. We ſee that the water is more noble then the earth, the aire then the water, and the fire then the aire, becauſe it is neerer therunto then any of the other Elementes.

The like is to be obſerued in the orders of Angels,

which are deuided into three Hierarchies, and the Hierarchies into ſo many Thrones: Inaſmuch as that is the moſt worthie Hierarchie, which approcheth neereſt vnto the creator of heauen. Now the Seraphins (as being neereſt vnto God, foraſmuch as no Angelicall ſpirite dooeth not contemplate more immediatly his diuine eſſence then they doe) and the Cherubins with the Thrones which are ſeated in the firſt Hierarchie, doe exceede in perfection, and nobilitie, the Gouernement, the Principalities, and the powers, which are in the ſecond Hierarchie. Theſe are more noble then the third, as being further off from the diuine preſence, in the number whereof are, the Vertues, the Archangels, and Angels. To ſpeake more plainly vnto thee *Poſsidonio*, take me for example a Prince in Soueraigne degree of nobilitie, whoſe children haue iſſue, I demand if his children their iſſue ſhalbe accompted as noble as his owne: Surely no, becauſe they are a diſcent farther off from the Prince (from whom their nobilitie proceedeth) then the firſt iſſue from him: and ſo wee ought to eſteeme of the lower degrees. If then *oſsidonio*, thou doeſt approche neereſt vnto the end whereunto we were framed, thy mind being ſo highly qualified with vertues, as I haue briefly recited to thee: I wil then yeeld vp my intereſt touching this cõtrouerſie, without debating ỹ matter any more: in regarde of any nobility of bloud deriued frõ thy anceſtors, which maketh as much for true nobilitie, as the light of a candle neere vnto the cleere ſunne-ſhine: But if I prooue vnto thee, that I doe come neereſt vnto this end, wilt not thou graunt me, that I am more noble then thou art, and that the victory belongeth vnto me? Surely thou canſt not ſay any thing to the contrary. I will ſufficiently declare vnto thee, that I come neereſt there-

thereunto hauing graced my life with vertues, vvhich are the only meanes to attaine vnto it.

Fabricio hauing ſpoken in this maner, and ſomwhat taken breath after his long diſcourſe, turning himſelfe againe towardes the company, with a plyant voice, proceeded on this manner.

You ſee moſt worthy gentlemen, that by the verie matter of this diſcourſe, I am conſtrained fullie to laie open my life vnto you, and conſequently ſuch vertues as are in me, and not other mens. Wherfore this ſmal ſpeech wil neceſſarily turne to my praiſe and commendation, contrary to my pretended purpoſe, bicauſe that true nobilitie, conſiſting (in my opinion) in the proper vertues of the minde, as I did moſt plainly prooue vnto you; I cannot declare, and much leſſe make you vnderſtande, whether I am noble, or not, except I recount them vnto you: for this reſpect (and God knoweth how willingly) I had rather that heereafter ſome other ſhould take the matter vpon him for me, as likewiſe bicauſe I would not that any ſhould girde at me therfore: which in friendlie maner I beſeech you may not be denied me, ſeeing that I am conſtrained thereunto, and that it lyeth vpon mee vainly to ſet foorth mine owne praiſes, and to tax another man. Howſoeuer it happen, truſting in your vertues, I will freely embolden my ſelf, with the greateſt breuitie that I can, to ſette foorth my praiſes vnto you.

I then being in my childiſh years, after that my tung began by little and little to vntie it ſelfe, inſtructed in precepts of vertue, I ſay I began to adorne my life, and my mind with ſuch qualities, as were fitteſt for my tender age: and likewiſe my young mind beeing capeable of vnderſtanding, my memorie of retaining, and my wit apt for learning, I gaue my ſelfe to the pleaſant ſtu-

die of humanitie; where I did not onelie lay vp in my memorie the remembrance of manie fables, and manie hiſtories, but likewiſe the knowledge of mans life, by the which I might eaſilie diſcerne for the ornament and dutie of my life, what waie was to be auoided, and which was to be followed. And longing further to attaine to the knowledge of the Artes and Sciences, and not onelie of them by which vvee doe diſcerne that which is falſe, from the troth; and of thoſe other by vvhich vve are made partakers of the vnderſtanding, both of matters naturall and heauenlie: but eſpeciallie deſiring to embrace moral philoſophie (which if vvee vvil giue credite vnto *Cicero* and others) wiſe *Socrates*, leauing the ſtudie of natural philoſophie, as leſſe profitable to cõuerſe one with another in this world, broght from heauen to earth) I vvas conſtrained to leaue my Countrie, and my parentes, to trauaile thither vvhere all liberall exerciſes are maintained, euerie dull vvit is inſtructed, and euerie harde vnderſtanding ſoftened. There did I beautifie my vnderſtanding, and my mind with knowledge and vertue, in ſo large meaſure as I need not nowe to declare vnto you.

By this meanes *Poſsidonio* doe I beleeue, that a man becommeth renovvmed and noble. By vertue accompanied with worthie ſciences, the mind of man is made noble and excellent. Vertue is that which tempereth a man that is of a milde nature, graceth him with honeſt and courteous conditions, maketh him prudent and wiſe, and finallie of a mortal man, immortall. That is the onely meanes by which we attaine to the perfect knowledge of him, who is the laſt ende and marke wee aime at.

I ſaie vertue is that wherewith the ſoule being beautified, doth cauſe vs to approch to the ende wee were made

made for, and consequentlie maketh vs partakers of the light therof. He that is a true noble man doth not shine, (neither ought he to shew himselfe by means of any other beames,) then those that spring and growe from vertue.

Now thou mayest be able hereafter to knowe *Posidonio*, from whence true Nobilitie of the minde dooth proceed, and to perceiue likewise, if learning is vaine or rather necessary, yea and the Sciences themselues, for the aduancement of nobilitie. Now thou mayst vnderstande, how much learning is to be esteemed aboue riches, by those that are perfect noble men. But besides the examples I haue already alleadged, I will yet moreouer giue you to vnderstand, how highlie it hath beene accounted of by other men of olde time.

For asmuch as onlie by the Poet *Euripides* his going to *Syracusa*, the *Syracusans* who had vnder their power many Athenian prisoners, they gaue them all their libertie, bicause they had learned without booke manie verses of *Euripides* who was an *Athenian* by birth. Bee you now the iudge, what greater guift they might haue presented to the Author of these verses.

And diuine *Plato* being by *Denis* the Tyrant, called from Athens into *Sicilia*, which voyage hee made by Sea, he no sooner set foote on land, but he was by him receiued in a triumphant chariot, and after that maner he entered the citie.

Surely *Denis* did not this honour neither to the wealth of *Plato*, nor to the worthinesse of his bloud, but to his deepe skill and vertue. *Alexander* of *Macedonia*, hauing giuen *Darius* King of *Persia* the ouerthrowe, amongest the kinges treasure hee founde a most pretious little casket, inriched with gold & pretious stones, wherin the Persian K. was wont to preserue his

his moſt pretious and odoriferous ointmentes: but Alexander, put neither ointment nor pretious Iewel, nor any of his treaſure therein, but the poeticall workes of *Homer* the Grecian, imagining he had not in al his treſure, a iewell of greater value, which did better deſerue to be locked vp there.

The reaſon hereof was not becauſe *Homer* was born of any noble ſtock, or that he had been of great wealth (for ſcarce was any man of ſo lowe eſtate in regarde of riches) but in reſpect of his diuine knowledge and vertue. If then the true eſtimation of man, proceedeth from vertue and knowledge, whoe dare then affirme, that they doe not make him noble, who is vertuous, of good behauiour, and wiſe, albeit he be not deſcended of any noble bloud? Surely he ſhould be a wicked perſon, vicious, and fooliſh, that ſhould iudge otherwiſe. For he whom thou doſt call and deeme to bee noble, hath onelie the apparance of a noble man: but thoſe I ſpeak of are noble indeed, in aſmuch as their vnderſtanding is made noble, the which doth afterward ſend forth the light thereof, for the ornament of our life. If thou art of this making *Poſsidonio*, I will iudge thee a perfect Noble man, but not in regard thou art onely deſcended of a noble ſtocke.

And truely both thy actions, and theirs likewiſe, who at this day do vaunt themſelues of the nobility of their bloud, are wholy diſpoſed and readie to followe the vanities and pleaſures of the body, which laſte but for a while, and not the ſeruice of the ſoule which is eternall and euerlaſting. Bloud then auaileth nothing to true & perfect nobilitie; & how little it maketh for thee, I haue already declared: for that which the vulgar ſort eſteemeth nobilitie of bloud, hath no other good thing in it ſelfe, but a facilitie, and ſleight to make one Noble.

O how many are there, whom this nobilitie of bloud, being considered in man without any other qualitie, of noble, maketh them base! For it is nourished with ignorance, fed with pride, increased with audacitie, liueth with temeritie, ruled with lightnesse, brought vppe in thestes, robberies, wantonnesse, violence, blasphemie, euil speech; & to conclude, continued in vanitie, which is an enimie to knowledge, a traitor to vertue, and contrarie to true nobilitie.

Imagine now *Possidonio*, how noble and perfect this thy Nobilitie of bloud is, thorough the which thou persuadest thy selfe, thou hast attained to the highest degree of Nobilitie that may be imagined, whereas thou art lowest of all other, whereinto the foolish opinion of the vulgar sort doth easilie cause thee to fal: forsomuch as without any difference at all, they call those Noble men, who haue but onely a shadow of Nobilitie, aswell as they, who are true noble men. Consider how light and careless the miserable beleese of mortall men is, and howe it is openly deceiued. I say then *Possidonio*, that thou art not noble, and that in thee can no markes of true Nobilitie bee seene, but rather a shadowe, or to say the troth, a meer & bare name of Nobility. Which if it be so, as I haue made manifest vnto you (and surely it is so, and cannot be otherwise) I may saie in arguing after this manner. That by how much the effect is far more perfect, and more commendable then the name of any thing whatsoeuer; by so much I am, and so doe deeme my selfe more noble then thou art: and howe farre the effect excelleth the name, is euident of it selfe. For asmuch as if I desire rather effectually to bee learned, then so taken, as I know thou coueteſt to be rich, then to be called wealthy.

Whereby thou mayest now well perceiue, in what

caſe thou art, albeit yeſterday thou wert of beleefe, after thou haddeſt recited ſo manie fables for proofe of thy nobilitie, that I ſhuld haue nothing to ſpeak againſt thee this day, but thou mayeſt hereafter iudge better whether I had any thing to ſay or no: for to goe thorough with that which offereth it ſelfe to bee ſpoken herein, much more time then is now left vnto vs wuld not ſuffice to handle the matter. Wherefore I will proceed further.

Now conſidering (gratious gentlemen) that vvhich *Poſſidonio* intended yeſterdaie, vvhen as he ſaid, that he is a true and perfect noble man, becauſe hee is diſcended of noble parents. Suppoſe the caſe that his propoſition were true, ỳ vvhoſoeuer is borne of a noble ſtock is a noble man, if I did denie that hee were iſſued of noble familie, vvhat could he ſay vnto me? Tell me *Poſſidonio*; if ſo be I ſhould deny that thou wert ingendred of noble bloud, vvhat wouldeſt thou anſwere me? what certainty wouldeſt thou giue me thereof? Surely thou vvouldeſt long goe groping in the darke before thou couldſt aſcertaine me thereof, and vvouldſt neuer be able to proue it vvith ſound reaſons, by vvhich I ſhould be conſtrained of neceſsitie to beleeue it. If then vvee are not certaine of thy birth, it followeth that thy nobilitie ought rather to bee called credible then certaine.

Wherefore I may very well ſay thus much. That euen as a certaine and true thing, is farre more perfect then that, which vve onelie beleeue to be certaine: So is my nobilitie farre more certaine than thine, becauſe it is to be beleeued indeed, and not to bee preſumed onelie, that I am noble, in regard that the true eſſence of nobilitie remaineth in me.

Thou vvouldeſt then ſay perhaps (quoth one of the young

young Ladies, vvho was offended with the laſt wordes of *Fabricio*, becauſe ſhe vvas a kinſwoman vnto *Poſſidonio)* that hee is not his fathers ſonne, ſeeing there is no more certaintie of his birth then thou affirmeſt? Truly *Fabricio* thou art falne into a great errour. As though wee knevve not what houſe hee is come of? Thou ſhouldeſt not ſo openlie alleadge that which is falſe to prooue thy argumentes as pleaſeth thee, for it doeth ill become thee: and now I hold that which *Poſſidonio* affirmed for troth, and that thou wouldeſt with thy ſubtill Sophiſtrie make vs beleeue, that white is blacke.

Scarce had the young Ladie ended hir wordes, but all the company began to laugh, with ſuch earneſtnes, that their heartes were ſore therewith; and ſhe imagining that they mocked her demanded ſaying. But I pray you vvhereat doe you laugh? Suddenlie the Lady *Aurelia* anſwered, who vvould not laugh to heare thee ſay ſo ſimply that *Poſſidonio* is not his fathers ſonne, as though he could be begotten without a father?

The young lady halfe angry, and with ſhame dying her cheeks with vermillion, like vnto the morning roſe, ſaid onely, I know wel enough what I meane; wherunto *Fabricio* anſwered ſmilingly.

I knovv he is his fathers ſonne, but I am not certaine vvhether he were his father, whom all we do imagine, or no: and it is to no purpoſe to ſay, that his father called him ſonne, or any ſuch like tales, for that can in no wiſe make me aſſured thereof.

We may then (quoth ſhe, not regarding their laughter) by this reaſon, ſay the like of al that are here preſet.

It is true Madam (qd *Fabricio*.) Alas poor ſoule that I am (qd ſhe) euer ſince I was borne, I haue hitherunto bin ſure who was my father, & likwiſe held my mother

for an honeſt woman, and nowe thou makeſt a doubt thereof.

How great laughter began againe amongſt them al, both men and women, you may eaſilie coniecture; but after they were all quiet, *Fabricio* proceeded on further in this manner.

Madam, I will grant vnto you, that *Poſsidonio* is deſcended of noble parentes, and conſequently that his nobilitie is certain: yet is not that nobilitie more praiſe worthy which a man obtaineth by his owne labor and trauaile, and thorough his owne vertues, then that hee receiueth from others? Surely not a little. And whether of the two wilt thou iudge to be more noble, either thy ſelfe *Poſsidonio*, or thy predeceſſors, who were the beginners and firſt founders of this thy Nobilitie? For they were moſt valiant men at Armes, and as thou diddeſt yeſterday conclude, and I do grant thee, they were pleaſing, and well accepted of their Princes: now ſurely wilt thou iudge thy ſelfe more noble then they, who dooeſt onelie repreſent their nobilitie, I beleeue that without any contradiction, thou wilt giue them the vpper hand. You may ſee now, how much more the nobilitie which any man doth purchaſe vnto himſelfe, is farre more perfect then that which he taketh from his anceſtors. Mine being of that ſort, without doubt it is more perfect and more noble then thine. If I would henceforward ſtrike the ſailes of my ſhip, and caſt anchor to ſtaie my ſelfe, without paſſing any further, I ſhould thinke I were arriued at the wiſhed hauen, and hitherunto to haue made as much waie as is neceſſarie for our enterpriſe: but ſeeing the weſtern wind bloweth on me with a pleaſant gale, and that the ſea is calme, & affoordeth me a proſperous nauigation, my heart will not ſuffer me as yet to ſtrike ſaile, but I will by little and little put out further.

The

The great Monarch of heauen, and good guide of the earth(worthy gentlemen) hauing here beneath in this world created all thinges,it pleaſed him in the end amongſt all other liuing creatures, which hee had framed,to forme one,who being the moſt perfit,and moſt noble of all others, ſhould haue the dominion of all other thinges hee had before created, and to him(albeit that he was made and framed of earth,as the ſcriptures doe witneſſe) he gaue reaſon, by which he ſhould rule, and gouerne himſelfe.Men were borne,and ſo they are yet at this day,as ſome do beleeue, with equall mindes, with equall powers, and with equall vertues. Becauſe nature,as wel to the riche as to the poore, to the noble man, as to the peaſant, to the mightie as to the weake, hath giuen reaſon and vnderſtanding, and brought them all naked into the worlde. And who is he,how poore,abiect,and miſerable ſoeuer, who at his firſt beginning,had not a minde,like vnto the minde of euery Prince or king? Surely no man. We wil ſay then, that nature wherof thou diddeſt make ſuch great brags, yeſterday, doth not bring forth one man better, or more noble, then other.

Now all men being equall by birth, vertue was that which firſt of all did diſtinguiſh them,and made a difference betweene man and man, becauſe that whoſoeuer ſhewed himſelf moſt familiar, and deuout towards her, was called noble, and the reſt remained ignoble. And whoſoeuer he was that did firſt of all inuent this word Nobilitie,he denoted thereby a ſingularitie, and ſeparation from other men. For Nobilitie is as much to ſay, as a note or marke, and a noble man, as a man more noted, and knowne, then any others. By reaſon wherof, man hauing by his the height and value of his courage, made proofe of many laudable actions, and

worthie workes, hee commeth to be ſeparate from the vulgar ſort, and knowne more plainely, whereupon it pleaſed the firſt inuenter, to terme this ſeparation, and this knowledge, Nobilitie. And to ſay the truth, it was not without apparent reaſon: for if wee looke into the effect and ſubſtance of this Nobilitie, we ſhall find that therein which I haue recited. Foraſmuch as Nobilitie is no other thing (without intermedling with ỹ which *Poſsidonio* alleaged yeſterday: For I haue this day prooued how true that is) I ſay Nobilitie is nothing elſe, but an excellencie, by the which things that are moſt worthy, do take place before thoſe that are leſſe worthy. We ſee amongeſt the planets (for his perfect excellencie) ỹ ſun is more noble, and hath preheminence aboue al other planets, being of leſſe worth: Amongſt ſtones the diamond: amõgſt mettals, gold: amõ gſt greater ſtones, the Phorphir. Euen the like is in man: for hee is more noble and worthy then other, who is moſt excellent and perfit amongſt them: which excellencie and perfection, is deriued from the nobilitie of the vnderſtanding, and not from the body, to ſeperate man from brute beaſts, as I ſaid before. Wel may you perceiue by this, that vertue in man is that which maketh him Noble and excellent, & cauſeth him to be preferred before others, and not bloud, nor riches, as thou didſt affirme *Poſsidonio*. And euen as man is far more excellent and noble then any other liuing creature; ſo by this excellencie & vertue of the minde, one man is more worthy, and more excellent then another. Now if hee is noble who with his owne vertues hath made the excellencie which is in himſelfe manifeſt, what excellencie haſt thou euer ſhewed to be in thee, tel me what greatnes, & what vertue is in thy mind? And who knoweth not this, that without great labor, a man cannot attaine to anie

worthy

worthy action, or laudable deed. Beleeue not *Posidonio*, that remaining continually idle as thou dooest and pampered in daintinesse, that thou art like euer to proone a noble man, which thou diddest yesterday declare in reciting the liues of thy predecessors, which did neuer spare neither cold, nor heat, nor fire, nor trauell in the world, to the end they might not only take ỹ name of Nobilitie vpon them, but the effect likewise, and hauing taken it, keep and conserue it. By such means man may aduance himselfe, and become noble and renowmed amongst others, & not by bloud. Writers report more of the vertue which *Iulius Cesar* shewed in Germanie and France, then of his birth. Neither doe they so much write what bloud *Octauius Augustus* was come of, as they haue done of ỹ ouerthrow he gaue to *M. Antonius*, & *Cleopatra*, neer to the mountain Actium in Epire, & of other his worthy actiõs, by which he brought into his subiection al Spain towards the West, the *Tartarians* & the *Sarmatians* towards the North, the Indians towards the East, the Parthians, ỹ Armenians: *Tygranes* king of the Medes, the inhabitants of Bosphorus & of Propontis, & those of either side the Rhin, and of the Danube, with infinit other nations: Of *Pompey* the great, the son of *Pompey*, *Strabo* doth recite his triũphs: especially ỹ which he had in Affrique against *Domitiã*. The deliuerance ỹ *Brutus* freed his countrey from, whẽ he did driue frõ thence *Tarquin* ỹ proud, with his successors, was cause that he was named the father of the Romane liberty: the like is said of ỹ other *Brutus*. *Fabius Maximus* was likwise rightly called the defender of the commonwealth, when he bridled the fierce courage of *Anniball* of Carthage. The wonderful ouerthrow, that *Claudius Nero* gaue ỹ *Carthaginians*, when he presented *Asdrubal* his head to his brother, do cause vs to remember him; not ỹ bloud nor the generosity of his ancestors.

The great value of *Horatius*, who gaue the people of Rome their libertie, when as hee alone ſtanding on the bridge, did reſiſt the *Tuſcanes*. The glorious Trophees, and many victories which *Camillus* the great obtained againſt the *Faliſci*, are recommended vnto vs: eſpecially thoſe which in his exile he had againſt the Gaules, who had forcibly taken and burned the citie of Rome. Likewiſe in this his expedition hee glorioufly vanquiſhed the *Volſci*, the *Latines*, the *Equi*, the *Erinqui*, with other Nations. Of *Tyberius Gracchus*, who alſo ſubdued the *Gaules*. Of *Paulus Emilius*, who conquered the *Gaules* that dwelt on both ſides the Alpes. Of *Paulus Emilius* his ſonne, who hauing brought *Liguria* into ſubiection, ouerthrewe, and tooke *Perſeus* king of Macedonia. Of *Marcus Claudius Marcellus*, who ſurmounted and ſlue *Viridimarus* king of the *Gaules*. Of al theſe there is nothing ſpoken of their Nobilitie, or of their bloud, or of their deſcent.

The wonderful deeds which both the *Scipiones* did, as well in Spaine, as in Affrique, and Aſia, for the which the one was called *Scipio Africanus*, the other *Aſiaticus*, doe cleerely manifeſt their renowne while the worlde doth ſtand in euerie place, and not their familie. The value of *L. Martius*, who ſucceeded thoſe two, againſt *Giſgon* and *Magon*, gathered the Romaine army togither, which was all broken, and valiantly ouercame the enemies. Likewiſe the vertues of *Scipio Naſica*, were ſuch, that beſides the victorious triumphs he obtained ouer his aduerſaries, he was rightly iudged by the Senate, to be the worthieſt of the Romaines, and that not in regard that hee was deſcended of the moſt noble ſtocke of Rome. And if I would ſo farre forth inlarge my diſcourſe, as well I might concerning this matter by true, and no fabulous examples: ſurely neither

ther time, nor my tongue woulde ſerue me to expreſſe them. Thou maieſt ſee then *Poſsidonio*, that ſo manie auncient trumpets as doe reſound in the world, do not ſet forth neither the worthineſſe of bloud, nor the antiquitie of linage, nor the rich pallaces of ſo many worthy knightes, but their notable vertue, their wonderful proweſſe, and their ſingular greatneſſe of courage. The bloud of that diuine *Plato*, or of learned *Ariſtotle*, or of wiſe *Pythagoras*, of *Socrates*, of *Diogenes*, of *Xenophon*, of *Demoſthenes*, of *Thales Mileſius*, of *Chilon* the Lacedemonian, of *Pittacus*, of *Bias*, of *Cleobulus*, of *Periander*, whoſe wiſedome did beautifie Greece, nor of other Philoſophers, by whoſe learning the ſecrets of Nature haue been opened vnto vs, was not ſo glorious and renowmed, as their vertue, of great fame. What doe wee heare of the birth of *Homer* the Grecian, or of *Virgil* of Mantna? What of that eloquent *Cicero*? What of the offſpring of famous *Titus Liuius* of Padua? of *M. Varro*? Or of *Criſpus Saluſtius*? What of the ſtocke of *Plinie* of *Verrona*? and of all they, who by their learning are at this day renowmed in the world? Truely nothing at all. But of their diuine skill, their arte and vertue, all men haue written and ſpoken. Therehence proceedeth that excellencie by the which one man is to bee preferred before another. From thence ſpringeth that dignitie, which cauſeth one man to bee diſtinguiſhed and knowne from another: Therehence proceedeth that true knowledge which maketh a Noble man: from thence groweth that ſeparation and diuiſion betweene man and man, cauſing the one to bee eſteemed Noble, gentle, and accompliſhed, and the other ignoble, abiect and vile. To conclude, from thence true nobilitie hath his beginning.

You may ſee nowe *Poſsidonio*, of what ſmall ac-

compt bloud is in matter of Nobilitie. It is then neceſſarie for him, whoſoeuer hee be that deſireth to become Noble, to beautifie his minde, with good and vertuous actions. I ſay his minde, which is as readie and apt to take the impreſsion of Nobilitie, as a faire looking glaſſe, which doth as well receiue the beautifull forme of faire Ladies, as the ill countenance of ill fauoured women, ſo the minde of man is prepared to receiue, either Nobilitie, or baſeneſſe. For as it adorneth it ſelfe either with good or bad conditions, ſo doth it preſent them vnto them.

Conſider a man whoſe minde is iuſt, couragious, temperate, prudent, pitifull, charitable, and louing, graced with all vertues: and another whoſe minde is vniuſt, vnconſtant, lauiſh, fooliſh, cruel, wicked, hatefull, and diſgraced with all vice: wilt not thou iudge the firſt, more noble and perfit (albeit he be not deſcended of ſome noble parents) then the latter?

And what if ſome times the firſt were but meanlie apparelled, and the latter did weare coſtly garmentes, wilt thou ſay that hee were more noble, of more accompt, and worthy of more eſtimation? no ſurely as I thinke: for I perſwade my ſelfe, thou haſt now changed thy opinion: And that thou wilt not fall into that errour which many doe, who beleeue that he ought to be more eſteemed & more honoured then others, who is well apparelled. For if thou diddeſt put coſtly rayment vpon a porter or ſome ſuch fellowes backe, perhaps he would ſeeme a farre more proper man, then a great manie ſuch gentlemen: and yet I hope you will not ſay hee is a noble man. For example heereof, take *Diogenes* the prince of the Senicall ſect, who went alwaies barefoot, with an old patched cloke on his ſhoulders,

ders, & in this maner was he found in Crania, by *Alexander* the great when he went to visite him: as we said of late. Such a kinde of habite did not giue commendation either to his wisedome, or his nobilitie. *Epaminondas* that famous Prince, and leader of the Thebane armies, did alwaies weare an old worne gown: which because he did neuer vse anie other, hee caused it oftentimes to be mended, whilest in the meane time he kept his house. You may now know hereafter, that true and perfit Nobilitie, is deriued from no other fountaine, then the vertues of the minde; and not from the worthinesse of bloud.

Here *Fabricio* paused a while, and afterwardes followed on his discourse in this maner.

Consider *Possidonio*, that poore apparell doth not defraud a man of his demerites. And like as wee haue concluded, that true Nobilitie descendeth from the vertues of the minde, and not from the dignitie of bloud: So then wee will yet conclude, that it doth not worke his effect, no not in riches. Forasmuch as if wee would maintaine this opinion of thine, that riches are not onely an ornament, but rather necessarie to the bringing forth of perfit nobilitie; it shoulde followe that pouertie, should make a man base and abiect, and as an enemie of true Nobilitie, it ought to be banished: but hee is greatly to be blamed who is of this opinion: Forasmuch as pouertie is not to be contemned, nor eschued, for such is the pasion it bringeth vs, as is the mind that receiueth it. For if the mind of man be addicted to ỳ which is contrarie vnto it, that is vnto riches, it breedeth no delight, nor pleasure, but cruell bondage, and infinite labour, and as a traitour to rest and quietnesse, doth miserably afflict the thoughtes of man.

And of this beleefe art thou *Posſidonio*, for becauſe thy minde longeth after riches, thou perſwadeſt thy ſelfe that pouertie is cauſe of all miſchiefe, whereas in deede the euill ariſeth of thy vnbrideled affection, which is buried in riches, and not of pouertie. But if the mind of man be not drowned in riches, pouertie ſhall be verie pleaſant, and delightfull vnto him, and his minde ſhall be ioyfull, and at libertie.

Democritus, beeing nouriſhed with pouertie, gaue as a gift vnto the common wealth of Athens his infinite wealth, imagining hee might farre better followe his ſtudie, with pouertie, then ſeruilie ſubiect himſelfe vnto riches. Like vnto him were *Diogenes*, and *Anaxagoras*.

What ſhall I ſay of *Phocion* of *Athens*, eſpecially worthie all honour and glorie; who albeit hee had twentie ſeuerall times been Emperour of the Athenians: yet did hee in ſuch ſort loue pouertie, that the Ambaſſadours of *Alexander* the great comming vnto him, and bringing as a preſent, a great quantitie of golde, they found his wife kneading of dowe, and himſelfe drawing water, whereby they deemed him to be verie needie, and yet notwithſtanding he did refuſe ſo rich a gift; eſteeming that to liue with pouertie, did bring greater tranquilitie vnto man, then to poſſeſſe great treaſure. Surely more ioyfull, and worthie of greater glorie, was the life of *Ariſtides* the Athenian, with his welbeloued pouertie, then the condition of *Callias* his fellowe Citizen, with his aboundant wealth.

And tell mee *Poſsidonio*, what vileneſſe did the pouertie of *Quintus Cincinatus*, and *Attilius Serranus*, men of excellent Vertues, bring vnto them? Who tilling the grounde, and ſowing their corne,

were

were worthilie choſen by the Senate to be the conductors of the Romaine armie: and thoſe ſelfeſame hands which did guide the plough, became rulers of chariots of triumph.

The apparant pouertie of *M. Curius*, a man of ſingular value, was no reproch vnto him, but rather made him worthy of eternall glorie, who after he had triumphed ouer the *Samnites* and the *Sabines*, returned to his poore cottage which was not capable of his greatneſſe, whither the ambaſſadors of the Samnites bringing vnto him a great ſumme of golde to make their pacification with the Romaines, they found him ſitting before the fire vpon a country ſtoole, eating in a woodden diſh: and neuertheleſſe he ſent back their treaſures after them, ſaying, ỳ he deſired rather in his pouerty to command ouer thoſe that were rich, then to become rich himſelfe; words well beſeeming his magnanimitie of courage.

Equall to this man in pooreneſſe, and ſtoutneſſe of mind, was *Fabricius Lucinus*, who likewiſe refuſed the guiftes of the Samnites: neither yet were the treaſures of *Pirrhus* king of *Epire*, which were offered vnto him, with the fourth part of his ſubſtance, ſufficient to make him looſe one iot of his value, albeit he was very poor. So manifeſt was *Attilius Regulus* his pouertie, that he coulde no more gouerne the empire in Affrike, becauſe at Rome his children hadde not wherewithall to maintaine themſelues.

But tell me *Poſsidonio*, dooſt thou deeme that theſe men for all their pouertie were not noble? God forbid, nay contrary, the ſingular vertue of their minde, made them moſt noble. Whereby thou mayſt plainely perceiue, that if nobilitie may remaine with pouertie, and pouertie with nobilitie, together in one ſubiect, whie

diddeſt thou yeſterday perſuade the contrarie; eſteeming that pouertie could aſwell agree with Nobilitie, as fire and water togither? And that his felicity is greater (ifſo bee man can attaine to any on earth) whoſe mind reſteth contented with pouertie, then his happines, who hath attained to the height of worldly welth, and lordly authoritie: the diſpoſition of *Alexander* the great may ſerue for proofe, who commaunding ouer the greater part of the worlde, becauſe *Anaxagoras* told him that there were many worldes, hee lamented greatly in his preſence, that he had not fully as yet conquered one.

And *Apollo* may ſerue for witneſſe heereof, whoe beeing demaunded by *Giges* king of *Lidia*, a prince of mighty power and wealth, if there were any man on earth more happy thē he was, by Oracle made anſwer, that *Aglaus Soſides* the pooreſt man of all Arcadia was more happie, becauſe euen vntill his latter age hee had liued with contented pouertie, with a mind ful of quiet. By the which wee may vnderſtand, that pouerty bringeth no reproch vnto nobilitie, and conſequently that riches are not the ornament, nor any neceſſary parte thereof.

If then, worthines of bloud be not neceſſary in matter of nobilitie, as with moſt euident reaſons, and manie plain examples of diuers, who albeit they were diſcended of noble and royall bloud, were yet iudged ignoble, (as this day I haue plainly ſhewed vnto you) and if riches, how infinite ſoeuer, doe not giue any grace or ornament therunto (as by the examples of many Noble and valiant Captaines I haue ſhewed vnto you) vvhat manner of Nobilitie is then in *Poſidonio*? Of what eſtimation ſhall wee account him? And if that pouertie bringeth no contempt to the greatnes of perfect nobi-

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lity, but contrarily doth exalt it: and that likewiſe the baſeneſſe of bloud of our predeceſſors, is no let vnto vs to becom noble, as not only by moſt pregnant proofs, but alſo by manifeſt examples of ſo many Popes, kings, Emperours, Conſuls, Pretors, as by my diſcourſe you haue heard, I haue cauſed you this day to vnderſtande, who although they did deſcend of baſe parents, yet did they neuertheleſſe by their deſerts, mount vp vnto the ſoueraigne degree of nobilitie: It followeth neceſſarilie, that my nobilitie is farre more worthye, and farre more perfect then *Poſsidonios* is:

And if theſe examples bee not ſufficient vvholie to mooue you, at the leaſt let the example of *Ventidius Baſſus* perſwade you, who drawing his birth from a baſe and poore ſtocke, was in his young yeares taken vvith his mother by *Pompeius Strabo*, when hee brought the Aſcolains into ſubiection, and before his Chariot was with other bondmen ledde captiue thorough Rome: but hee growing into further age, that hee might the better haue wherewithall to maintaine his eſtate, hee gaue himſelfe to buy Mules, and with them to carrie trauellers by the vvaie; by meanes whereof, he paſſed with Ceſar into France, where he beganne to ſhew the greatneſſe of his courage, he hauing during the Ciuill Warres many matters impoſed vppon him of no ſmal importance, and did execute them all with great magnanimity, and great admiration.

For which his vertues, he was not onely intertained into Ceſar his friendſhippe, but moreouer, had great office beſtovved vpon him, beeing firſt made Tribune of the people, and afterwardes Pretor. And albeit that in that time he was with M. Antonius iudged an enimy of the Romans by ỹ ſenate, yet notwithſtanding hauing made

made his peace, hee did not onely obtaine the office of a Pretor, but he attained likewise the degree of *High Prelate*, and afterwards was aduaunced to the dignitie of a Consul. This was that *Ventidius*, who beeing by M. *Antonius* made Generall of the Easte prouinces, put the Parthians to flight which were descended into Syria, and three sundry times gaue them great ouerthrowes, and was the first who in Rome triumphed ouer the Parthians. And after his death, was honourablie buried by the Romans. What was his birth? what was his estate? what vvere his riches? vvho did of a bondslaue make him free? who exalted him to so great nobilitie? & to so great wealth? surely it was not the antiquitie of ỹ bloud of his ancestors, nor his great welth, but the vertue of his minde. O worthy vertue vvhich possessing the mindes of men, dost exalt them euen to the skies!

Consider (Gentlemen) what let and reproch, the base birth of *Ventidius*, was vnto the glorie of his Nobilitie: Consider I pray you, if his issue from so meane a place, vvas any hinderance vnto him, to rise to so high honour. And beleeue not *Possidonio*, that at this daie there is any limited ende set, by which a man may become noble; for euen as the noble families which at this day are in the vvorlde, haue hadde a beginning to make them noble; so may the ignoble without any let, attaine thereunto.

I may then conclude, that the baseneſſe of my bloud, nor the want of vvealth, are no let nor hinderance vnto mee to become noble. The worthines and vertue of man is that which maketh him noble. It maketh him rich, it exalteth him vnto the skies, and finally of a bond man, it setteth him free. Wherefore *Possidonio*, I need not feare though my aunceſtors, as thou diddest yester-

day

day affirme, were ſcarſe knowne, becauſe I doubt not but that that vertue and learning vvhatſoeuer it be, that is in me, is of force ſufficient to make thoſe noble who ſhall hereafter iſſue from me, if ſo it be to be beleeued, that any nobilitie reſideth in bloud.

Doth it now ſeeme vnto thee, that I haue with my ſophiſticall arguments ſhewed white for blacke, wherof thou wert ſo much afraide; or made thee vnderſtand the verie troth it ſelfe? And to the ende, I may more ſtrongly perſwade thee, thou muſt know this, that he is farre more noble, who being borne of baſe parentage, hath beautified his mind with vertue and good conditions, then he that is deſcended of a noble ſtock, being as wel qualified as the other.

This perhaps may ſeeme ſtrange vnto thee *Poſſidonia?* yet will I make it very plaine. For no man will denie of any thing whatſoeuer, but the rewarde ought to counteruaile the paine that is taken: now hee vvhich is borne of baſe parentage taketh far more labor to become noble, then he that is deſcended of noble bloud: therefore he ought to receiue a greater recompence. That his labor is greater, cannot be denied. For he that is borne of noble bloud, is alwaies in the path to becom noble, and is not put to that pain, to attaine to the perfectiõ of nobility, as he is, who is born ofno noble ſtock, in aſmuch as the one findeth the waye open and free, whereas the other findeth it full of rockes and thornes. Now both of them hauing attained therunto, who will denie me, but that his nobilitie ought to be more eſteemed, whoſe father was but a meane man, then the other? Surely not any man. Are theſe fables *Poſſidonio?* Doth it as yet ſeeme ſtrange vnto thee? I hope not.

Howbeit *I* will proceed further, and ſay. That hee ought to be more worthy of praiſe, who giueth him-

ſelfe vnto all worthy enterpriſes, not being forced nor conſtrained by any man, then he that addicteth himſelf vnto ſuch laudable actions by force and compulſion. Now he that is by bloud noble, is rather forced then otherwiſe by his owne vertues, to ſet foorth his nobility, leaſt that his fathers nobilitie do baſely take end in him ſelfe, but rather that by him it may be maintained and conſerued in his ſucceſſors: wheras he which is born of no noble ſtock, is far more noble, and far more worthie of praiſe, then hee which is borne a Gent. although both of them be equal in vertue. Haſt thou capacity to comprehend this reaſon *Poſsidonio*? Thou mayſt novv conſider, if I vſe any ſophiſtry, as thou diddeſt doubt I vuld; for ſurely theſe are moſt manifeſt reaſons, which I alledge for the troth, the which notwithſtanding is manifeſt and cleere of it ſelfe.

Fabricio went ſtil forward in his diſcourſe, when as M. *Peter Anthony* interrupting him, & turning towards him ſaid.

This thy concluſion ſhould be very great *Fabricio*, if it were as true as it is apparant, and as it ſeemeth thou doſt affirme it for troth: For ſomuch as that part is alwaies of moſt force and ſtrongeſt (which cannot be denied) where two reaſons do concur togither then wher there is but one. Nowe he that is of noble bloud, & innobled by his vertues, hath in him two ſorts of nobility, the one of bloud, the other proceeding of vertue, which cannot be in him, whoſe father was nonoble man, albeit he be eſteemed equall in vertues vnto the other: wherfore his nobility ſhall not bee ſo puiſſant and mightie. Which thou thy ſelfe didſt affirme for true, when as to diſſolue this argument (if my memorie ſerue me well) where *Poſsidonio* went about to proue that the magnificence and glory of a man, ought by reaſon to extend it ſelfe vnto his ſucceſſors, thou didſt confeſs, that if you

were both equall in vertue, *Posidonio* his nobility shuld bee greater then thine: whereas contrarily in this thy new conclusion, thou dost not only make them equall, but the one in a higher degree, then the other: wherefore we ought to conclude, that he that is borne of noble parents is far more noble. And likewise I cannot easilie gather how this thy last reason doth well hang together, by which thou wouldst proue that he is vvorthie of greater honor, who without any necessity, doth employ himselfe in vertuous actions, then hee that is forced therunto. For this thy maxime is true, that of euery worthy enterprise a mans recompence ought to bee so much the greater, as the detriment & hurt which may come vnto him in executing thereof. Now vvho so is borne of noble bloud, is worthy greater blame & dishonor, when he doth not maintain the nobility of his fore fathers, then the ignoble by birth: therfore in cõseruing it, he ought to haue greater reward. By which reasons these thy two last conclusions, doe in my iudgment remain somwhat the weaker.

You take no smal matter vpon you M. *Peter Anthony*, answered *Fabricio*, if you seeke to boult out the troth of these your 2. propositions: for on both sides there may be spoken sufficiently; the troth whereof I would gladly knowe, if it were so necessarie vnto our purpose, or if it were not so late. It cannot be late (qd M. *Peter Anthony*) yes (qd ỹ whole company) & so late as we shal not haue time to mount on horsback. How quickly is time slid avvay (qd M. *Peter Anthony*) you may see *Posidonio*, how you make the hours sooner to passe away then vve thought for: as for mee, I did verily beleeue wee might haue staied here a good vvhile, but seeing it is so, we wil for this euening let our riding alone.

I do not care much for riding abroad answered *Fabricio*, let vs follow on our purpose, & therewithall tur-

towards *Posſidonio*, he ſaid. Worthy gentlemen, whatſoeuer thing is on earth, man iudgeth it either good, or euill, or holding a meane betvveene both. I demaund then *Posſidonio*, in which of theſe three qualities thou wouldeſt place true nobilitie? Not in the euil I trow, for then nobilitie ſhould be euil. Nor in the mean, for then ſhould it be ſomtimes good, and ſometimes bad. Wee muſt then neceſſarily conclude, that it ought to be placed in that which is good. Conſiſting in that which is good, it muſt either be in the goods of the body, of fortune, or of the mind. If wee ſay that nobilitie conſiſteth in the goods of the body, as to be faire, to bee in health, or in the goods of Fortune, as in riches: it ſhould then follow, that beautie, health, or riches ceaſing, which 3. thinges are ſubiect to corruption, nobility would ſoone decay. We are then conſtrained to conclude, ẏ it conſiſteth in the goods of the mind, which are vertues, as long ſince I affirmed. Beſides we haue to conſider, whither nobility conſiſteth in riches, or in man. If thou ſaieſt *Posſidonio*, that it conſiſteth in riches, beſides that which I haue long ſithence alleadged, it ſhould further follovv, that looke which way a mans wealth were caried, they being moſt noble, thither ſhuold his nobilitie goe, which ought in no wiſe to be vttered. VVe muſt then conclude, that it remaineth in man. Being in man, it is either by nature, or by purchace. If by nature, it followeth that we are all equally noble; in aſmuch as one man (as I ſaid vnto you) was the beginner of all humane nature, of whom we are all deſcended, but that falleth not to be conſidered of. VVe will then ſay that it is gotten. But how is it purchaſed? ſurely by the proper vertues of the mind, and not by any other means. Theſe are the reaſons *Posſidonio*, which I doe alleadge in the behalfe of true nobilitie, doe they not ſeeme to be true?

Surely

Surely I cannot possiblie make the troth more plaine vnto thee, then I haue done to day.

But seeing the sunne beginneth more and more to hide it selfe, I cannot as I would, follow my pretended purpose: Howbeit I will rest satisfied with that which I haue effectually spoken hitherunto: for I was not by anie necessitie constrained to say so muche. It onely remaineth for mee *Posidonio* to tell, to whom the ring ought to be adiudged, which I would willingly do, but that I know *Nennio* to be a iudge sufficient for a greater disputation then ours. And he may well in the wisdome of his vnderstanding discourse of the perfit qualitie, & noble condition of the ladie *Virginia*, by whom the ring which we desire was giuen. For she being most accomplished with vertue, of most noble behauiour, most worthy for her honour, it auaileth thee nothing to equall thy self vnto her in considering thy Nobilitie of bloud, or the quantitie of thy treasure: (for thou maiest haue well vnderstood how much they make for Nobilitie.) *Nennio* will likwise weigh her gentle words when she said: Let the most noble of you two take the ring, by the which shee did affirme that there was Nobilitie in both of vs, and yet that one was more noble then the other, and to the most noble she gaue it.

In thee the Nobilitie of bloud concurring, caused by thy predecessors, in me the Nobilitie of mind, wrought by my owne vertues: It shall be an easie matter, not onlie for *Nennio*, but for any other of any common capacitie to decide a matter of so small moment. Howsoeuer it be, it seemeth now vnto me high time, to end my discourse: and albeit I could not vtter all that concerning this matter, which came into my conceit, and which might well haue been saide: neuertheless I will leaue off, as hauing contented my minde and quieted

it: especially reposing my self vpon the iust iudgment of him, who to morrow, or at any other time when hee shall see good, may determine this our controuersie. Of whom I haue had that reputation, and so doe still hold him, that although I had not alleaged the one half of these reasons, yet had they been sufficient, to come to the knowledge of the trueth of this our disputation. And moreouer, whosoeuer doth well consider what hath been spoken yesterday, and this day, on both sides, he shall find nothing else, but an vnbrideled kind of life, to combate with a moderate liuing; Ignorance with knowledge; dissoluteness with modestie, vertue and honestie to fight against their contraries: and whether of those two sides doe bring most ornament, and Nobilitie vnto man, is easily to be iudged.

They all knew, that *Fabricio* was come to the end of his discourse, and that he had nothing else to say: wherfore we all arising from our places, we went to take the aire, not on horsebacke, because the time was spent, but on foote, alongst the pleasant garden. And after that euerie one with his friend, had vttered his opinion concerning *Fabricio* his discourse, we parted ech from other, some this way, others that way: In the end wee all of vs except two, who still walked in the garden, the sweetnesse whereof we all enioyed, met vnder the fresh gallerie. These staied not long before that against their willes, they gaue vs occasion of no small passtime: For on the one side of the garden, there was a woode so thicke with high greene trees, that scarcely you could haue planted one more there.

This thicket, where it ioyned to the garden, it was inuironed with a deepe ditch, which was drie without water: and on the other side closed in with the garden wall. Within there were nourished manie wild beasts,

and

and towardes the garden, there was a little draw bridge to enter into it.

These two young men, drawing downe the bridge, went in and simply left the bridge downe as they came forth, immediatly for feare of those that entred the wood, there issued out two yong kids, and a hart. And if the garden gates had not shut of themselues, ỳ beasts had been loste: which one of the seruants perceiuing, he sodainly called one of his fellowes, who brought a brase of dogges with him, which hee let slip at these wild beasts; we being mooued with the crie of ỳ dogs, and noyse of the hunters, wee looked out at the windows which were next the garden, where we might see this vvar already begun, vvhich vvas pursued vvith an infinit pleasure of vs all. For vve might see them runne vvith great svviftnesse, the beasts flying, and the dogs followving, but ỳ chiefest sport vvas, the many turnings in the garden, and the crooked alleies, by vvhich the beasts did fetch many a skip, & turne to saue their liues, from the deadly pinching of the dogs. And after they had some 3. or 4 times rounded the garden, the hart, ỳ bridge being yet cleane dovvn, & the gate open, vvith a light skip, got into the thicket again; the kids followved, & the dogs after, which one of the seruants perceiuing, he drew vp the bridge, least they should come out again. But longing after the sport, vve came down, vvith each of vs a cudgel in our hand, you may gesse vvhat these beasts did (vvherof there vvas great store in the vvood) vvhen they savv ỳ dogs followv them. They ran euerie way, somtimes thorow ỳ thickest places, somtimes right forth: & vvhilest vve vvere intentiue after this sport, we might espy 3. seruants cõming out of ỳ vvood vvith the 2. kids, the hart, & 2. yong hares, vvhich had been slain in this vvar. Wherefore imagining this pray to be sufficient after the ordinarie rate, after ỳ commandement

was

was giuen to take vp the dogges, who were not yet out of breath: we came forth of the woode, and ſhortly after ſate downe to ſupper according to our woonted order, where wee ſupped verie pleaſantly, the winde blowing verie freſhly vpon vs: after ſupper wee fell in talke of this ſodaine hunting, which fell out vnlooked for. Wherein wee continued, vntill the ſtarres were ſeene in the skie, hauing beforehand taken order that *Nennio* ſhould the next day followe with his diſcourſe at the ſame time that *Poſsidonio*, and *Fabricio* had done theirs, and then we entred into the houſe, where after we had walked a little, ſeeing it a fit houre to go to bed, the torches being lighted, vve vvere brought euerie one vnto his lodging.

The third Booke.

AS often as waighing with my ſelfe I conſider, howe great the weakenes is which nature yeeldeth vnto mā, I cannot ſurely imagin whence it ſhoulde proceed, that al men what ſoeuer doe oftentimes feele a certaine motion of bloud, which ſpreadeth it ſelfe about the heart, when as they do only call to minde but the verie name of Nobilitie, which they poſſeſſe, and that much more, when they are told thereof by ſome other. Nay there are ſome, who without meaſure coueting that title, doe puffe vp their mindes, eſteeming that to be the greateſt fauour of all other. Other ſome there are (without doubt of a more damnable opinion) who are mounted vp to that height of pride, by the onely remembrance likewiſe of that name, hauing no thought to the difficultie of the effect thereof, that they doe verilie perſwade themſelues (ſuch is the deceiueable beliefe of mortall men) that the whole woulde is at their commandement, and ſurely they deeme themſelues to be equal to no other, then to God himſelfe, and by this

conceite they being led away, they deſpiſe all vertue? Surely this doth draw me into great doubtes: For as I ſay, if I enter into conſideration of mans weakenes, and do waigh wherof he is made, I ſee nothing therein, but vile filthineſſe. And nature did not onely giue this vnto man at his firſt creation, but likewiſe in the diſſolution of this mortall life, it made the ſame farre worſe. Seeing that the weake and fraile members of man, as it is euident of it ſelf, ſo ſoone as the ſpirit is ſeparated from the bodie, how ſoone they are changed into wormes, into earth, & loathſom ſmels: O miſerable life of man, and of ſhort continuance! But in truth this ought to be ſmally regarded (although it be a great argument of ỹ frailty of man) if we did note not only in the beginning, & the end of the life of man, but euen in the midſt therof, matters of greater woonder, becauſe we ſee that all thinges vnder the heauens, doe make continuall warre ech one againſt themſelues, and all togither bid moſt cruell battaile againſt man alone. The aire oftentimes, is aſſailed with darcke cloudes, with flaſhing lightning, and threatning thunder, and all theſe are ordained to vexe man. The water againſt the fire. The fire againſt the water, and both togither do fight againſt man. Moiſt thinges againſt drie thinges, and drie thinges againſt moiſt, and both moſt and drie warre againſt man. The South ſtriueth with the North and the other windes, and all of them togither blowing with great impetuoſitie, in the depth of the ſwelling ſeas, with great force do often deceiue ỹ vain affections of man. What ſhal I ſay more? One man doth conſpire againſt another. If then the life of man be after ſo ſtrange a maner, wrapped in ſo many miſeries, and in ſo many dangers; I cannot wel imagine what cauſe he hath to wax ſo proud, with this title of Nobilitie, which is giuen him. And as for my ſelfe, I know not els what I ſhould ſay vnto you, but that

ſuch

ſuch men being on high lifted vp with a ſuperfluous deſire of glory, do let theſelues be carried away with their vaine appetites, like vnto a bird which flying in the aire hath no aſſurance. O fooliſh Nobilitie, if ſo we ought to call it, or rather deceitfull ſhadow. For we are not able to comprehend what aid this Nobilitie (no leſſe deſired then reuerenced of mortal men) may bring vs: for aſmuch as it neither bringeth wiſedome, nor knowledge, incomparable gifts, which are ſent vs from God, neither doth it make vs more iuſt, or more prudent, which are qualities that conſiſt in the ſoule. It may be that it is an aide vnto the body? No ſurely in my opinion, for it doth not giue neither greater beautie, nor greater ſtrength, nor greater grace thereunto: by all which reaſons we may eaſily gather into how great errour theſe maner of men doe ſo fooliſhly fall. Yet will I not ſay, but that ſometimes Nobilitie, is cauſe of great good, as it is indeed, when it is true Nobilitie: but that which at this day beareth ſway in ỹ moſt part of men, is not onely cauſe of any good, but contrarilie of great euill. For if we would without imagination, paſſe thorow all the Cities that are in the world, we ſhuld find very few, or it may be none at al, where there are not factions, & diuiſions between gent. and the common ſort, from whence afterwards do bud hatred, quarrels, & ſo many murthers as we may heare of euery where. Amongſt many hiſtories, I might here recite to you, how ỹ people of Rome, by reaſon of ỹ diſcords which did ariſe between ỹ Patriciens & them, often abandoned ỹ city, & made their abode in ỹ hil called *Mount Sacro*, vntil *Meneuius Agrippa* made peace betwixt thē. Experiēce hereof hath not bin only ſeen in forrain cities, of which I coulde bring you infinite examples, but euen in our owne, within theſe few yeares: I ſay then, that as one

ſort of Nobilitie is the cauſe of euill, ſo is the other of good. Howſoeuer it be, I do wholly referre my ſelfe to the iudgement of *Nennio*, who this day ſhal take vpon him the whol diſcourſe: And it may be by good means he will agree (as it is commonly his cuſtome) the diſaccording opinions of *Poſsidonio*, and *Fabricio*, which by the two former bookes, you may haue particularly vnderſtoode. And ſo much the more it will delight vs to heare him, as their opinions doe ſeeme vnto vs to bee cleane contrarie, by meanes whereof likewiſe we ſhall heare the determining of the queſtion propounded: wherfore inaſmuch as I purpoſe not to intermingle my words with his, tempering my ſpeech hereafter, I will indeuour without diminiſhing any word, orderly to ſet downe that which he diſcourſed, as much as the meanneſſe of my wit, will giue me leaue.

By this time there was no ſtarre ſeene in the skie, becauſe the ſunne had alreadie chaſed the moiſt ſhadow of the night from of the earth, and with his ſhining brightneſſe, euery part of our hemiſphere was enlightned, and the birds merrily chirping from the top of the greene branches, gaue good witneſſe, that the morning was come, when as both men, and women, being riſen, after praiers was ended, mounted on horſebacke, and being entred into delightfull medowes, they ſoftly paced on treading the greene graſſe vnder their feet, vntil it ſeemed vnto them high time to draw back againe.

Wherfore they being returned, & ſhortly after ſet at table, they fed togither with great mirth, and contentment, & dinner being don, ſom went to play at eſchets, others at tables, & ſom to take their reſt, as ſeemed beſt vntó thē. But the middle of ỹ day being come, they aſſēbled thēſelues after their accuſtomed maner in ỹ place

vvhere

whereas *Posſidonio* & *Fabricio* had the 2. former daies, made their diſcourſe. And by this time *Nennio* beeing readie, they ſat down vvithout order round about him: vvho beholding the companie, and ſeeing them all attentiue, vvithout any further ſtaie, gaue beginning to his diſcourſe in theſe wordes.

I did conſider hovv hard a thing it is, to laie a heauier burden on a mans backe then his forces are able to beare; in aſmuch as it ſildome happeneth but that the one of them doth thorovv vveakeneſſe fall to ỹ ground. And therefore I feared greatlie, that the like this daie ſhould not happen to my ſelfe. Seeing that if I doe on the one ſide weigh the deapth of the queſtion that is propounded, or the difficultie of thoſe thinges that might thereupon be ſpoken: or on the other ſide the vveakeneſſe of my vnderſtanding, the feeblenes of my memorie, togither vvith my young yeares, certainlie not I onelie, but euerie one may in himſelfe iudge the inequalitie of theſe things.

VVhereupon it might eaſilie come to paſſe, that I my ſelfe, contrarie to my intent, and you, ſhould remain vnſatisfied, & the matter vvherupon vve are to diſcourſe, ſhould not be ſufficientlie opened vnto you. But ſitting in the midſt of ſo louing a companie, where there are men of better wit, and grauer iudgment then my ſelfe; and being moreouer conſtrained by you, by my iudgement to make peace betweene theſe tvvo champions, I dare not refuſe ſo waightie a matter, though my forces be ouerweake, becauſe I aſſure my ſelfe, that vvhere I ſhal ſhew my ſelfe feeble or wanting, that you wil take order to adde a ſupplie thereunto, and if ſo bee that *I* faile, you wil hold me excuſed, & impute it to my yoũg yeares. And if you heare any good thing come from me, I doubt not but you will giue mee fauourable hea-

ring. Wherfore my courage taking ſtrength from this ground, I will not iudge it inequall vnto the burthen which I beare, and vnder his fauour who fauourably giueth ſuccour vnto mortall men, I will by little and little begin my diſcourſe.

Worthy company. The two opinions which were theſe two daies now paſt at large related, by *Fabricio*, and *Poſsidonio*, are manifeſt vnto you, which you haue wel vnderſtood how different they are. For the one prooueth Nobility to conſiſt in bloud, and in riches, and the other in the vertues of the mind. Hee denying bloud and riches, to be any thing neceſſarie: the other, that learning and knowledge needed not therein. In this wiſe they did inlarge their diſcourſe, alledging and reprouing many arguments, which both the one and the other ſide did make ſhewe vnto the hearers to bee probable: ſo that ſcarſely it may be diſcerned, which of them draweth nearer the troth. Yet to boult out the troth of this controuerſie, before we paſſe any further, to ſhew what that true nobility is which we ſeeke for, which can very hardly be done, bicauſe it is of ſo many different kinds. One ſort therof is deriued from the glory of the bloud of our anceſtors, accompanied with riches, of the which *Poſsidonio* ſpake ſufficientlie the other day. An other ſort proceedeth from the vertues of the mind, and of this *Fabricio* diſcourſed yeſterdaie, with as great ſharpneſſe of wit as need to be. Of theſe two mingled togither, and concurring in one ſubiect, is produced another ſort, which I wil name compounded nobility. To theſe two may be added another kind which is called ciuill nobility. Before then ẏ we come to determine our diſputation, wee will firſt ſee the ſubſtance of euery one of theſe ſorts of nobility, and I will begin with that which *Poſsidonio* defended.

Nobi-

Nobility of bloud (worthy Gentlemen) is no other thing but a certaine quality which is deriued from the bloud of our aunceſtors, and continued in their lavvfull poſterity, and by how much it is more auncient, by ſo much is it accounted more worthy amongſt the vulgar ſort: and albeit there be diuers degrees of this nobility of bloud (the one of great men, in the number of which are thoſe that are ſimple barons: the other of greater perſonages, as Earles, Marqueſſes, Dukes, & ſuch like, a third in the higheſt degree of ſupremacy aboue the reſt, as of kinges and Emperours) yet notwithſtanding I vvill onely intreat of the moſte inferiour degree; to vvit, of the nobility of thoſe, vvho poſſeſſe neither Earledomes, nor Baronies, as it fell out in the diſputation betvveene *Poſſidonio* and *Fabricio*, leauing al the other vnſpoken of.

But like as a man can hardly ſtaie his feete vppon a turning vvheele, ſo with as great difficultie may hee make any abode vpon this nobility, by reaſon that on what ſide ſoeuer I turne my ſelfe, I ſhall finde it more wauering and inconſtant, then the leafe which vvithout any ſtay, is toſt and blovvne heere and there with the wind.

For ſo diuers and of many faſhions is the beleefe of men, touching the beginning and obſeruance thereof, that we can ſcarſly diſcerne whether it bee Nobilitie, or ruſticity.

Inſomuch as that manner of life, vvhich vve ſee is vſed by our gentlemen to conſerue themſelues in their nobility, and which the vulgar ſort dooth repute to bee good, it may be in ſome other citie it wil not be accounted ruſticity, the cuſtomes beeing different, and theirs Nobilitye: and the like eſtimation will wee holde of others.

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We see that in the famous and lordlie cittie of Naples, that marchandize is separated from the exercise of noblemen, they agreeing therin with the Thebanes, who in like maner did despise marchandize, and by pub like decree did ordaine, that no marchant shoulde execute any publike office, within the city of *Thebes*, except he had left off the trade of marchandize the space of ten yeares: VVhich is cleane contrarie in the rich, and magnificent citie of Venice, where not onlie those of the baser sort, but noblemen likewise, and such as are of the number of their Senators, do vse marchandize, for the which they expose their liues to a thousande dangers, & wel-nigh coast the whole world. The worthinesse of the bloud of their predecessors, maketh a distinction betweene the noble and ignoble, and not their maner of vocation.

You may see how that kind of life, which is accustomed amongst the noble men of *Venice*, is reputed rusticitie and vile amongst the gentlemen of *Naples*, vvho hold their nobilitie as good, whereas the Magnificos of *Venice* doe esteeme theirs perfect, and the *Neapolitans* bad. What conformitie doe we finde between the gentlemen of Rome, and the *Florentines*? or betweene those of *Millan*, and the gentlemen of *Genoua*? Surelie such as the former. And how manifestlie the meanes to conserue the nobilitie of statelie France, doe differ from that of renowmed and noble Italie, I thinke there are few vvhich doe not knovve it: Forsomuch as the gentlemen of France & of other countries, do liue vpon their lands, and hold it for rusticitie to dvvel in tovvnes, & contrarily in Italie, we leaue the countrie for clowns to inhabite, and gentlemen doe commonlie dwell in tovvnes. It is a woonderfull thing to consider that if a man do turne his thought into any part of the vvorlde vvhat-

whatſoeuer, he ſhal finde no countrey inhabited with men where this nobilitie of bloud, and this difference betvvene noblemen and thoſe of the baſer ſort, is not: and yet notwithſtanding ſcarſe is there any nation, who both in the beginning and in the conſeruation thereof, doe agree the one vvith the other. For ſome do deem him noble (and none other) who honoureth himſelfe with the beames that doe ſhine from his anceſtors, placing true nobility only in bloud.

Some doe affirme that he is only noble, who is indued with great riches, albeit he haue no ſparke of noble bloud in him. Others ſay, it conſiſteth iointly in bloud and riches. Others make themſelues and their poſteritie noble, in following the war, applying the ſame with all their indeuour, albeit (in the opinion of ſome men) they doe deſcend but of baſe parentage. Beſides, ſome doe hold for certaine, that this true nobility conſiſteth in thoſe, vvho doe vvholy diſpoſe themſelues in the ſeruice of kings and princes, and of ſuch as depend of them, as if the true glory of nobilitie did ſpring from thence.

This eſpecially is obſerued amongſt noblemen, and ſhewed by great traine of ſeruants, by rich and ſtatelie apparell, and by a certaine liberall kind of life in all their actions. Others doe deeme that he liueth moſt nobly and moſt Lordlike, who beſides the properties aforeſaide, hath great ſtore of horſes to ſerue him. There are yet others, who do affirme that to keepe houndes and Hawkes, and ſuch ſorts of beaſts, and euery day to be a hunting, is an exerciſe and life aboue all other moſt fit for a Gentleman.

Others do deeme, that they maintaine their nobility well, in liuing idlie, and vſing nothing elſe but gaming. Some doe thinke, that they lead a very honorable life if

they liue honeſtly and moderately. Some imagine that Nobility is to liue in the countrey, as I ſaide vnto you, ſome to dwell in a towne. Some thinke it to conſiſt in marchandize; others are of a contrary opinion, that a noble man ought not to vſe the trade of marchãdize. But who can reckon vp the diuers ſorts of nobility? ſeeing that not onely amongſt diuers nations wee finde, hovv different this nobility of bloud is, as well in the beginning thereof, as in the vſe thereof: but euen amongſt thoſe of the ſame countrey. For albeit that in France, and elſewherè, ſuch is the cuſtome, as I haue related vnto you: notwithſtanding in *Gallia Belgica* in the prouince of *Lionois*, in *Gaſcoine*, and about *Narbonne*, and in other places in France, there are aboue three hundred ſortes of life, for the conſeruation of their nobility, not conformable the one with the other. We ſee likevviſe the very ſame in the people of Spain, becauſe the inhabitants of *Arragon* doe not equallie obſerue the ſame meanes to maintaine their nobilitie as thoſe of the kingdome of *Grenado*, of *Caſtillia*, of *Catalonia*, of *Biſcay*, of *Nauarre*, or of *Gallicia* do, much leſſe they of the kingdome of *Portingall*.

What conformity is there betweene the Britons, the Normans, and the Fleminges? What agreement betweene either the high or lowe Germaine, and the inhabitants of Saxony? Surely none at all, becauſe the nobilitie of one Nation is diuerſlie diſtinguiſhed from an other. And if we will enter into diſcourſe of the inhabitants of the higher and lower Hungarie, of England, of *Auſtria*, of *Bauaria*, of *Valachia*, or of the great and leſſer *Polonia*, of *Ruſsia*, of *Muſcouia*, of *Lithuania*, we ſhall not find amongſt thoſe Nations, no nor ſcarſe particularly amongſt themſelues any certaine meanes from whence the Nobility of bloud dooeth

ſpring,

spring: nor any certain maner of life, amongst the gentlemen which dooth agree togither.

And not onely in the west and Northren partes, but likewise in the Easterly and Southerly, we see they doe vse such diuersitie of nobility. Forsomuch as those of that countrey we call Greece, doe esteeme the life of their Gentlemen, to be the true and proper life fitte for Gentlemen: whereas the *I*nhabitantes of the Greeke Ilands doe iudge it but bad.

VVhat resemblance of Nobility is there betweene the people of *Syria*, of *Capadocia*, of *Armenia*, of *Mesopotamia*, of *Media*, of *Persia*, of *Parthia*, and of a number of other prouinces? and returning to those vvho dwel in the partes of *Afrike*, we finde that they hold this nobility in great account, but the qualities and the meanes which they vse to conserue it, are different: becausse the people of *Mauritania* are not conformable amongste themselues: nor the people of *Getulia*, nor of *Lsbia Cirenensis*, nor likewise they who dwell in *Aegypt*, or in both the prouinces of *Aethiopia*, or in the habitable countreyes of *Arabia*, or of India, amongst whom (albeit that in other respects they bee a monstrous and cruell nation) yet haue they this diuersitie of nobility.

But vvhy doe I thus recken vppe the habitable parts of the Worlde? For to conclude, you shall finde this diuersitie of the beginning and exercising of Nobilitie of bloud so great, not as there are whole nations, but as there are people and Toyvnes in the world.

And that I may not wander into places so farre off, vve may see the same in Italy, where there is no towne which I can name vnto you, which is conformable

vnto another, in the first originall and vse of this nobility: if then the beginning and exercise thereof, bee not one and the same, but different in euery place, how is it possible for me to tell which is the best and most commendable sort thereof? Yet haue I the hart to conclude this necessarilie, that there is no certaintie in the beginning and vse of this kind of nobilitie, for if there were, it should carrie with it constantnesse and stabilitie, from the which it should take beginning, and by the which it should equallie conserue it selfe in euery country.

Scarce was *Nennio* come to the conclusion of his discourse, when as maister *Peter Anthonie*, turning towardes him, said merilie vnto him after this maner.

Nennio, if thou beareſt any respect vnto mee, staie there; for albeit that it hath been very pleasing vnto vs, to heare of so many fashions of nobilitie, and of so many diuers customs, as those of the countries which thou didst alleadge: yet notwithstanding this thy laste conclusion which thou diddest necessarily gather, doth not followv so easilie as I think. For although that at Rome, at Venice, at Naples and elsewhere, the customes bee changed (as thou sayst) and the maner of nobilitie, yet doth it not follow for all that, that there is no certaintie thereof.

For in Naples it is certaine, and this sort of nobilitie which is accustomed amongst the gentlemen, is most constantly maintained there; so likewise at Venice, at Rome, and in euery other place. And it is to no purpose to say that they are contrarie, for neither at Naples, nor elsewhere, shalt thou finde any contrarietie in the obseruance of their nobility. Likewise if so it were, it would follow that the one should be nobility, and the other rusticity: by which thou mayst certainlie iudge, that there is certainty in this nobility. As for example,

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we ſee that at Venice, the ſame lawes, or the ſame ſtatutes, are not obſerued, which are at Naples and at Rome; for they doe varie, as they may beſt fit and agree with the places: and yet doe they ſeeme cleane contrarie the one to the other: howbeit amongſt the lawes and ſtatutes of Venice there is no contrarietie, although they agree not, but are cleane different from thoſe of Naples. Shall wee therefore ſay that they are not al lawes? yes ſurely that they are: Euen ſo may we ſay of all theſe kindes of Nobilitie, which albeit that either they doe ſeeme, or are indeed contrarie the one to the other, yet doe they not leaue the name of Nobilitie.

M. *Peter Anthonie* had no ſooner ended his ſpeech, but *Nennio* replied after this maner.

This certaintie of Nobilitie, which you would haue M. *Peter Anthonie*, if wee conſider thereof in a ſeparate place by it ſelfe, as it ſeemeth you doe, that is true which you ſay: Whereas I affirme, that in the whole world, there is no certaintie of Nobilitie, for the great diuerſitie that is therein, by the which you may eaſily diſcerne which is either more or leſſe perfect, then the other: foraſmuch as we finde not anie one ſorte of nobilitie, aboue mentioned, which bringeth an approoued reaſon for the beginning therof, or that the life and exerciſe of noblemen be reaſonably grounded vpon any certaine foundation: but I finde them to conſiſt in obſeruation without anie ground, whereof I can giue you no other reaſon, but that the vulgar ſort haue after their owne will ſo appointed it, the like whereof doth not happen in lawes, which although they ſeeme or doe differ the one from the other, they doe all notwithſtanding carrie a reaſon for their ground: ſo that this your ſimilitude can hardly hold, this nobilitie be-

ing without any certain principle, and without any determinate meanes.

M. *Peter Anthonie* made no other reply vnto his answere, as if he had been thorowly satisfied therwith: wherefore he preparing to follow on his discourse: M. *Dominico* breaking off his speech, said thus.

Albeit that in the defence of Nobilitie of bloud (worthie gentlemen) manie reasons haue been produced the other day, both by *Possidonio* and our selues, by the which we went about to proue, that it was true and perfect, to the which *Fabricio* afterwards to shew that his Nobilitie, and not that which *Possidonio* held for, was true and perfect, did with subtile reasons brauelie make answere thereto, and by his argumentes force himselfe to perswade vs, that such kinde of Nobilitie was not anie way to be held of any accompt. Yet notwithstanding, before wee passe anie further, and before you giue any iudgement thereof *Nennio*: I will not forbeare in confirmation of the first opinion of *Possidonio*, with new reasons, which now come to my remembrance, to shewe you, that the Nobilitie of bloud, conioyned with riches, as a speciall gift comming from God, ought not onely to be had in estimation, but likewise to be reuerenced. And if it seemeth vnto thee *Fabricio*, that in alleadging new reasons, I should renewe the enterprise begun, letting the discourse of *Nennio*, let not that displease thee: for it is not meete that any of our reasons should cause the iudge to be silent, whose wisedome I am sure will thoroughly resolue thereof, though wee propose sundrie argumentes which shall happen into our remembrance, whether it be against thee, or in thy fauour.

It shall please me well that thou returne to discourse of the nobilitie of *Possidonio*: for if I be permitted to answere

ſwere aſwell as thou to propound, I doubt not, but that I ſhal refute thy arguments as I haue done the reſt, and that thereby the conceit of the iudge, ſhalbe more reſolued, and the end of the diſcourſe ſooner brought to paſſe. Say on then that, which thy memorie will giue thee leaue. M. *Dominico* proceeded in this maner.

The great Prophet *Dauid*, hauing vpon his reſounding harpe, with ſweete accents ſong a diuine dittie to the praiſe of his mercie, who was his creator, he afterwards framed another, in the which by the prophet it is manifeſtly ſeene, that the Nobilitie of bloud in man is permitted of God, which with his owne ſeed is tranſfuſed vnto his lawfull heires, when as hee ſaith in theſe words: That powerfull and abundant ſhal his ſeede be on earth, and that honour, glorie, and riches, ſhalbe in his poſteritie. You ſee how they honour the glorie of man, which is no other thing then that vvhich vve terme Nobilitie, continued in his poſteritie. Thou ſeeſt likewiſe *Fabricio*, how that riches are ioyned togither vvith Nobilitie: for the Prophet doth in ſuch ſort offer them ioyntly togither, that it ſeemeth that the glorie and Nobilitie of man ſhoulde be altogither imperfect, if it vvere depriued of riches. Whereunto notvvithſtanding thou vvouldeſt in no wiſe conſent. And it woulde auaile thee nothing if thou vvouldeſt ſay, that ỹ prophet vvas lifted vp into a heauenlie contemplation, he coulde not offer temporall, but ſpirituall and eternall riches, and ſo vvee ought to take this text alleaged ſpiritually.

For if wee vvoulde vnderſtand it in this maner, it ſhoulde bee plaine agaynſt his meaning, not ſo muche in regard, that he ſayth expreſſely, he ought to be powerfull on earth, and mightie in the ſeed of man,

man, and not in heauen, as for that in the ſame ſong he afterwardes purſueth ſpirituall goodes, which man may obtain; ſo that neceſſarily we ought to vnderſtand it of temporall goods.

Likewiſe it appeareth manifeſtly by the ſame ſcripture (which as you knowe ought in no wiſe to bee tranſgreſſed) that nobilitie doth deſcend from our auncestors. And likewiſe I remember to haue read in that booke (wherein the heauenly inſtructions of the life of man are diuinely handled) a text which ſheweth plainly, that the glorie and nobilitie of the ſonne, doth depend of the honour of the father; who if he be depriued thereof, the ſonne likewiſe ſhalbe diſhonoured. Thou ſeeſt how the nobilitie, and ignobilitie of man deſcendeth from his auncestors, as *Poſsidonio* affirmed.

And in another place the ſame authour charitably doth admoniſh vs, that we are to praiſe no man before his death, becauſe he is knowne in his children, intending thereby, that the honor and glorie of man, remaineth with his poſteritie after his departure out of this life. Truely *Fabricio*, theſe are authorities, which can hardly be auoided, beſides the which I coulde yet alleadge an infinite number like vnto theſe.

M. *Dominico* was no ſooner come to the end of his ſpeech, but *Fabricio* like vnto a braue warriour, who left nothing vntried, which might ſerue for reſiſtance, and his owne defence, oppoſing himſelfe againſt him, ſaid thus.

Theſe your authorities, M. *Dominico*, are not ſo hard to be withſtood, as it ſeemeth at the firſt they are: for if we reſt vpon the litterall ſentence, I doe not denie but the prophet vnderſtandeth that which you ſay, but I know that you are not ignorant, that it is neceſſarie for vs that are chriſtians, to expound the holie ſcripture,

not

not according vnto the ſound of the wordes, leaſt wee eaſily incur the like blame which the obſtinate Iewes (againſt their wils) fell into, but according to the ſpiritual ſence. King Dauid then (intending by his comfortable ſong, to perſuade man that he ſhould be happy if he feared God in his commandements) what bleſsings did he offer him? Children, honour, and riches, perhaps, but not certainlie: for the rewarde of thoſe vvho feare God, is to abound in earthly thinges.

But hovve many Prieſtes and Monkes are there vvhich are depriued of children, and of the honour of the world? How many are there, who in hermitages doe liue an auſtere kinde of life? How many begging Friers are there, wanting wealth? And how many are there, who haue vowed their chaſtitie to God for the beleefe they haue in him? Certainly the number is infinit. And notwithſtanding, they haue byn iudged worthie of Gods fauour, and numbred amongſt ſaints. So I doe iudge him to feare God more, who holdeth his virginity deare, and offereth the ſame vnto him with a free hart. Who flyeth from the honors and vanities of the worlde, and diſtributeth his goodes to the poore. The workes of mercy then, are the ſeed of the merciful man, and of him that feareth God, and not his children, which ſeed ſhal be mighty on earth as is promiſed. And he who for the feare of God, ſhal deſpiſe the honor and riches of the world, without doubt he ſhall obtain celeſtial glory with eternall riches.

In like ſort ought we to vnderſtand the laſt authority alleadged by you, which ſeemeth to intende, that man is knovvn in his children: for hardly ſhal we know him that departeth this world, without leauing any iſſue. We ſhal know him indeed in his children, that is to ſay, by his fruits, for if he hath ſowne good fruite, in

this mortall life, vve may certainly iudge, that he ſhall receiue better fruite in the life to come. To the other text I anſvvere: that the author in his booke, diſcourſing of precepts (no leſſe full of Diuinitie then comfort) admoniſheth vs (amongſt other thinges) that vve take good heed, that we boaſt not of our fathers ſhame, becauſe our glory dependeth on the honor of our father. Intending thereby (according vnto reaſon) to teach vs, ỹ vvho ſo mocketh his father, mocketh himſelfe. And that is true in it ſelfe, but not that which the ſoũd of his words ſhevveth vnto vs.

Maiſter *Dominico* did perceiue that *Fabricio* had nothing elſe to ſay in his defence, & did willingly receiue his anſwer, which he had made on the ſuddaine, which vvas ſo much the more pleaſing vnto the company, as forſaking the expoſition of the letter, he drew neere to the ſence of the troth. But *Nennio* (as one to vvhome the troth of their propoſitions and anſweres vvas vvell knowne) was not pleaſed that any of them ſhould intermeddle in anſwering and replying. Wherefore paſſing on further, he entered in this maner to his diſcourſe againe.

Howſoeuer it be *Fabricio*, this nobilitie of bloud, by the vulgar ſort is helde in the higheſt eſtimation aboue any other: forſomuch as they doe repute thoſe to bee true Noblemen, who are deſcended of a noble familie, ſo that if any mention be made amongſte them of Nobilitie, they vnderſtand not nobilitie of mind, but nobilitie of bloud. Which maketh great in fauour of *Poſsidonio*, for this vvord Noble, beeing ſimplie ſpoken by the courteous Lady, ſeeing that we are in doubt thereof, we ought to take it as it is receiued by the common voice.

But that I may no longer intertaine you heere with

Poſsidonio,

Posſidonio, we will paſſe on with *Fabricio*, to the other ſort of nobility, for the which hee hath plaide the ſtout warriour.

That is not like vnto the former eſteemed of any worth, by the vulgar ſort, but by men of learning, and ſuch as are well brought vppe, it is highlie accounted of, and greatly reuerenced, and it conſiſteth in the vertues of the mind.

For nobility of the minde, is no other thinge, but a ſhining brightneſſe which proceedeth from vertue, which maketh them famous and Noble that are poſſeſſed therewith, of the excellencie and perfection whereof howe amplie *Fabricio* didde diſcourſe, is wel knowne vnto you: for in diſcourſing thereof yeſterday, with ſuch argumentes as came into his mind, he intertained vs vntill the euening. And ſurely I finde it neither ſo diuers, nor ſo changeable, nor ſo vnconſtant as the other, but it is alwaies, and euery where, after one faſhion, certaine and ſtable. It onely taketh beginning from vertue, and with good and vertuous actions is conſerued. Whereupon ſome doe call it perfect nobilitie, becauſe it ſtandeth in neede neither of bloud, nor of the riches of other men.

How may that be (quoth one of the Ladies of the company) who with a witty readineſſe oppoſed her ſelfe againſt him) that it needeth not riches, ſeeing that they are not onely neceſſary vnto the nobility of bloud, but to this likewiſe, whereof you ſpeake, as it ſeemeth vnto me.

For as *Posſidonio* did the other day relate vnto vs, no man can attaine vnto any degree of vertue or nobilitie, except riches doe make a breach and vvaie vnto him.

And who knoweth not, that if any wiſe or learned man, for want of wealth went ill apparailed, that hee ſhould not be accounted as a noble man? You may ſee then how riches are neceſſary vnto the Nobility of the mind.

The young Lady hauing ended hir ſpeech, *Nennio* made this anſwer vnto her.

Put caſe Madam that it were true, that a man cannot attaine vnto vertue or nobility, without riches, notwithſtanding I ſpeake not of the meanes to become noble: for according as you conſider them, riches are nothing elſe, but the meanes by the which the will of man is put in execution: but it is of nobility it ſelfe, that I talk. For after that man hath innobled his mind with vertue, and driuen from thence all vice, what neede hath hee of riches? What hurt receiueth he if he couer not his body, if it be not ſet foorth with gorgeous apparell? it may be Madam, that a meane, honeſt, and modeſt attyre, doth not onely amongſt the better ſort of men, but euen amongſt the common people, giue no leſſe grace to one that is become noble, in this maner, then an imbrodered, laſciuious, and laced garment, doth ſet forth your noble man of the other ſort.

So that if we will effectually comprehend the true eſſence of man, and with a right eie conſider his qualities, he ſhould caſt off all his habilitie, depriue himſelfe of honour, forſake the goodes of fortune, lay aſide his coſtly apparell, and ſo we ought to beholde naked, not his body, but his mind, of what calling ſoeuer he be of, as Diogenes and others did, of whome *Fabricio* didde ſpeake yeſterday. Thus ſhall we know whether hee bee noble, or ignoble; good or euill, if in regard of his Nobilitie, he hath need of that which is his own, or of that which other men poſſeſt: when we ſee him not vainlie

ſet

ſet forth with faire apparell, and rich pompe, wee ſhal deeme him noble: for if a ſtocke, in forme of a man, were clad with them, ſhould wee iudge it noble? whoſoeuer woulde thinke ſo, had no iudgement of a man. Which wiſe *Themiſtocles* did plainly teach vs Madam, who being asked to whom he would giue his daughter to wife, whether to a man adorned with vertue, but poore; or to a rich man deſtitute of vertue: he ſaid, I had rather a man wanting wealth, then riches that had neede of a man. I ſay then, that riches are to no vſe vnto him, whoſe minde is indued with nobilitie, ſo that he be not wholly depriued of them; for hee ſhoulde rather want meate, then apparell. But returning to our purpoſe, I doe conſider, that he in whoſe reuerence all liuing creatures doe humbly bowe themſelues, hauing created the earth, only in giuing it being, he bountifully beautified it with diuers plants (as wee may ſee euery where) vnto the which (beſides their being) he gaue nothing els but life.

Afterwards he created thoſe liuing creatures, which we call brute, or vnreaſonable, the which doe farre and neere walke in the ſea, in the earth, and in the aire, and to them he gaue life and ſence.

Finally, God framed man vnto his likeneſſe, to whom he graunted not onely being, life, and ſence; but he added reaſon therunto, which is a peculiar gift vnto man. Man being then partaker of all theſe qualities, in which of them ſhall we place true Nobilitie? certainly not in being, nor in life (for that ſhould be common with the earth and with the plantes.) Much leſſe in ſence (for then ſhould we make brute beaſtes noble.) Wherfore we will then neceſſarily ſay, that true and perfect nobilitie of man, conſiſteth only in that part, which maketh man different from beaſtes; and that is reaſon, by the

which he is called a reaſonable creature, and the other vnreaſonable, as I ſaid vnto you. He then who leadeth this mortall life ſwaruing from reaſon, is not to be accompted nor called Noble, albeit that he deſcende of noble bloud: For albeit he hath the outward ſhape of a man, being depriued of the moſt Noble part, which God hath giuen vnto man (I meane reaſon) he remaineth without doubt to be reckoned amongſt vnreaſonable creatures, and to be compared vnto beaſts: which being not partakers of reaſon, doe leade their life according as their ſence teacheth them. And who knoweth not this, that man caſting away ſo noble a gift, can neuer attaine vnto the ſoueraigne Nobility of his laſt end? Hee then that ſubmitteth the operations of his minde vnto reaſon, and knoweth well howe to diſtinguiſh it from ſenſualitie, is a right and perfit gentleman.

M. *Peter Anthonie* taking the ſpeech vpon him, ſaid thus: Seeing that it is lawful for vs with new reaſons to fortifie either ſide of the defendants, I will not forbeare to let you heare, that which I haue called to mind, in fauor of *Fabricio*, which being ſaid, he proceeded in this maner.

Hereby worthy gentlemen, is ſhewed the excellency of the nobilitie of the mind, that one thing is more noble and excellent then another, by how much the ſubiect thereof is excellent and Noble: Nowe the ſubiect of this Nobilitie, is farre more noble and worthie then the nobilitie of bloud, becauſe it proceedeth of vertues: therefore the nobilitie of the minde is much more excellent and noble then the nobilitie of bloud. And not onely in conſideration of the ſubiect, it is more perfect then the other, but likewiſe in the regard of the obiect, becauſe it is alwaies ſeene to remaine in a more worthie and vertuous obiect; that is to ſay, in a man

man well borne, prudent and wiſe. Whereas the other may be in a moſt vile obiect. Foraſmuch as if of noble bloud, a fooliſh, or mad child be ingendred: notwithſtanding amongſt the vulgar ſort, he is accompted one amongſt noble men. How manie are there ſprong of a worthie familie, who become robbers in the high way, murtherers, theeues, ſlaunderers, and finally enemies to themſelues? Ought we to accompt ſuch noblemen, becauſe they deſcend of noble parents? God forbid, for conſidering the vileneſſe of their mind, they ought to be iudged not only ignoble, but more baſe and abiect, then any other vnreaſonable creature, although that the common ſort being deceiued, doe hold them in the rancke of noblemen. What nobilitie ſhall wee accompt that woman to be of, who drawing her nobilitie from a worthy ſtocke, doth repute her ſelfe noble, and notwithſtanding making ſmall accompt of her honor, doth villanouſly giue her bodie and life in pray, to delight thoſe to whom ſhee ought not to haue yeelded?

What Nobilitie is there in thoſe children, who in their ſwadling cloutes deſcended of a noble ſtocke, are no ſooner come into the world, but they are eſteemed of noble bloud, and yet are neither capable of vertue nor reaſon? ſurely none at all. You may then perceiue, in conſidering both the ſubiect, and the obiect of the nobilitie of the minde, howe great likewiſe the excellencie, and the perfection thereof is. And to proceede further vpon this matter: I finde that euen Fortune ſometimes hath her part in this Nobilitie of bloud, conioyned with riches: for if my ſelfe and you were borne of a Noble familie, and thoſe of baſe parentes, or that wee be by birth riche, and they poore, vvhat glorie, vvhat Nobilitie, vvhat praiſe,

praiſe, ought we to attribute to our ſelues? and vvhat profite, or what fault, (or rather what defect) are vve to impute vnto them? Truely none at all; ſeeing that they haue committed no offence, and we are not aduaunced thorow our riches. The glorie then, and the fault ought to bee attributed vnto fortune, whoe gouerneth worldly matters, as it pleaſeth her, and not vnto vs: whereas the Nobilitie of the mind, is not in ſubiection, nor ſlauerie; but free, and out of all humaine perill: and he vvhich by his ovvn vertues, becommeth noble, ſhall haue the honour, and the glorie thereof, and not fortune, nor his aunceſtors, nor any other whoſoeuer.

Here M. *Peter Anthony* broke off his ſpeech without ſaying anie more. Wherefore *Nennio* taking the diſcourſe vpon him, ſaid thus.

Certainly to fortifie this ſide, concerning the nobilitie of the minde, no leſſe delightfull, then true reaſons do ſtil offer themſelues; as amongſt others, that which I novv remember: foraſmuch as I eſteeme that hee ought to be adiudged perfit, vvho hath no need of any other: novv the nobilitie of the minde is of that ſort, therefore it is perfit. The like vvhereof cannot be ſaide of the Nobilitie of bloud: for if it vvere perfit, it ſhould haue no need of riches, vvhich (according to thy ſaying the other day *Poſidonio*) are not onely an ornament, but a part of Nobilitie. Which is more then true: for nowe adaies, a man can hardly conuerſe amongſt gentlemen and great Lords, but that he ſhalbe mocked of euerie one, if hee be not rich, and hath not vvherevvithall to ſpend of his ovvne, or at the leaſt if he be not vvell clad in apparell: vvhich thinges are in this our age not ſmally ſet by. It follovveth then, that bloud is not ſufficient of it ſelfe alone, to make a perfect

nobleman.

nobleman. And we cannot with reaſon name that perfect nobilitie, which proceedeth from thence, as being ſubiect to that which is verie incõſtant. Wherfore we will ſay, that if the noble man by birth wanteth riches, he ſhall likewiſe want nobilitie: which concluſion *Poſsidonio* thou diddeſt affirme in thy diſcourſe to be true. And in truth it is come to paſſe at this day, when as the noble born doth exerciſe ſome craft, or handiworke, that is vile and derogating from nobilitie: But how poore ſoeuer a man is, that is born of noble bloud, I would not iudge that he ſhould become ignoble, thorow pouertie, albeit that he had not the ſame renowne, and reputation, with men of this age, as he that is both noble and rich. Herehence it commeth, that manie deſcending of a high linage, giuing themſelues to ſome vile exerciſe, haue darckned, and wholly loſt their nobilitie, ſo that they are no more eſteemed of the bloud of Noble men, but reckoned amongſt the cõmon ſort. Herehence it proceedeth likewiſe, that amongſt manie being of one familie, ſome are reputed noble, and others ignoble. You may ſee then, howe corporall and baſe exerciſe, doth bring contempt vnto the nobility of bloud, and conuert it into his contrarie. We muſt then conclude, that vertue only is neceſſarie therein. For a noble man by bloud, who is deprined of vertue, is made no otherwiſe, then as a ſepulchre of white marble, inriched with fine gold, which at the firſt ſhewe is pleaſant to the ſight of thoſe, that behold it: but conſidering afterwards the rotten body, and filthy ſtinch, that is within it, it ſeemeth vnto them hideous and horrible. Such a one is hee who is deſcended of noble bloud, for at the firſt ſight he ſeemeth gratious, & pleaſing, but looking afterwards to the foule corruption of his maners, and to the default of the gifts of his mind, by which he ſhuld

become worthie, neither this grace, nor the pleaſure which was found therein, is anie more ſeene, but in ſteede thereof baſeneſſe, and deepe contempt. Whereof hee may be called noble in apparance by the which the common people (whoſe eyes are blinded, that they cannot ſee the trueth) doe lightly iudge, and holde him as a noble man, which is farre different from him, whoſe minde is fraught with vertues, becauſe that hee holdeth not an apparance of true Nobilitie, but the verie eſſence thereof.

Nennio made no ſtaie, but ſtill followed on his diſcourſe, when as the Ladie *Camilla* who was deſirous to heare an end of their controuerſie (which it maie be ſhee gathered by the laſt wordes vttered by *Nennio*) turning towards him, with a prettie grace, according to her woont, and yet with ſomewhat a haſtie ſpirite, ſhee ſaide theſe wordes vnto him.

Thou concludeſt alreadie *Nennio*, that *Poſsidonio* is he that ſhall looſe the wager, ſeeing that his nobilitie is apparant, and not true.

You are verie haſtie Madame (quoth *Nennio*) to deſire to heare the ſentence before time require, and before the reſt of the companie: for in that diſcourſe which nowe we doe make to approoue, or diſallow of the two ſortes of Nobilitie, both the one and the other opinion is fortified, as you may haue vnderſtoode, with more pregnant reaſons, ſo much there wanteth that I intend not as yet ſo ſoone to deſcend to the determining of the queſtion, ſeeing that wee haue ſo great time leſte vs. Let it not then diſpleaſe you to ſtaie a little, and to hearken vnto mee.

Both to ſtaie and to heare you likewiſe, ſhall pleaſe me

me well, aunſwered the young Ladie: but yet it ſeemed vnto me that you intended as much as I ſaide vnto you.

Nennio replied: Madame, I pray you haue patience a little, and be attentiue vnto my ſpeeche, vntill I haue ended it: for I doubt not, but you ſhall with the reſt be ſatisfied with my iudgement. The yong ladie being appeaſed, *Nennio* taking the diſcourſe vpon him, began to ſpeake in this wiſe.

Nobilitie of bloud indeed is apparant, but hee which is depriued of vertue, is hardly eſteemed to ſhine amongſt men, vvith the glorie of his bloud onely, vvhich commonly bringeth forth ignorance, whereupon followeth aftervvardes contemptible pride. For ſo ſoone as the light of mans vnderſtanding is occupied vvith ignoraunce, vvhereby it is let, that it cannot enter into the trueth of thinges, man cannot conſider, that anie is more wiſe, or more learned then himſelfe, but becommeth proude, in ſuche ſorte that thorough ignorance, hee is made bold, inſolent, and raſhe, eaſily contemning all maner of vertue, of ſcience, and of manners, groping in the darke, like vnto a blinde man.

Of which companie it ſeemeth, that the worlde at this daie, is but too plentifull, ſeeing that euerie where yee ſhall finde thoſe who fooliſhlie deeme themſelues to bee mounted to the higheſt degree of Nobilitie, whereas indeede, they are at the loweſt ſtep therof, in that they haue no care to innoble themſelues any further, but wretchedly deſpiſe all thoſe, who doe learne any ſcience, and do followe vertue, and they diſdaine men of noble conditions, and conſequently thoſe who are more worthy then themſelues. Of theſe I intēd to ſpeak, who waxing proud of their bloud, haue

the eyes of their vnderſtanding blinded with a groſſe and thicke vaile of ignorance, vvho vvoulde iudge the Lord God, if hee were to deſcend vpon earth againe.

O fooliſhe ſect of mortall men! I cannot truely imagine to what end they leade ſo miſerable a life, not taſting of the ſweetneſſe of vertue, from whence ſpringeth all Nobilitie. Were it not farre better for man that might taſte thereof, and wil not, that hee were depriued of life? yes ſurely. If then they liue without any reaſon, what difference ſhall we make betweene them, who eſteeme themſelues chiefe amongſt other noble men, and the baſer ſorte of men, nay rather betweene them and beaſtes? I can hardly finde it. For all doe equally followe the ſeruice of the fraile fleſhe, ſetting aſide eternall thinges.

Ought theſe men to waxe proud in this ſorte, who conuerſing with wiſe courtiers, or with other men deſeruing eſtimation, where they diſcourſe of knowledge, of hiſtorie, or of anie other vvorthie vertue, doe become worſe then beaſtes, and ſometimes doe reſemble images of Marble?

As it happened the other dav, that being in companie with certaine Lordes (with ſome of you that are here preſent) where there were men of great learning, and skill: and amongſt them ſome of thoſe who bragge ſo greatly of their Nobilitie, wee diſcourſed a great while both of hautie, and meane matters: and intending to paſſe the middle of the day, in ieſtes and diſportes, we ſet abroche certaine tales, vvhich ſeemed ſo much the more pleaſing vnto vs, as they were farre from the trueth: but theſe noble men did maruellouſly wonder at them: As the tale of the ape of India, ỳ plaid ſo well at cheſſe, & this other, that in the midſt

midſt of the riuer Tabor mens words do freeſe, & afterwards thawe when they come to the fire. Euery one that had any quicke capacitie, inuented ſome fable or other, but theſe noble Lordes (who feared to ſet their foot on ground, and to put off their hatte for marring their haire) being preſent there in company (as I tolde you) were in the like taking, (vnderſtanding of ſuch great wonders) as the people when they heard the holie frier preach, vnto them, the faſting, virginity, ſimplicitie and holineſſe, of the bleſſed ſoule of ſir *Chapellet*: and two of them harkened to our tales with like attention, as *Callandrine* did, when he vnderſtoode the diſcourſe of the wonderfull vertues of *Elitropia*: I was verie deſirous at that time, to adde vnto the former ſtories, the miracle which happened to *Callandrine* himſelfe, when he was gotten with child by his wife, which made them all to ſtand amazed.

Many other pleaſant tales we told, which being ended, ſome one of the company ſaid, yea it is true, I remember it well, and it was about that age of the world, when as Oxen did ſpeak, which he had no ſooner ſaid, but one of theſe great Noblemen did aske him, ſaying: Then oxen ſpake in times paſt. Whereunto the other being a young man of a ſharpe witte ſaide, yes ſir; but might wee vnderſtande their ſpeech, quoth the noble man? yes my good lord, quoth he, and they oftentimes ſung in company with men, and that with ſo ſweet melodie, that their muſicke ſeemed to ſurpaſſe the harmony of the religious Nunnes of *Agnus Dei* of *Padoua*. I cannot wel tel you how great the laughter was, which vvas continued ſo much the more, that in laughing he vvas ſo amazed, that for a long time he held his mouth awry, vvondring greatly at thoſe things hee had heard. Truely the ignorance of them is ſo great and groſſe,

that it depriueth them of their vnderſtanding, that it maketh them like vnto brute beaſts: as by an example which happened the other day, I will better giue you to vnderſtand. For comming to church with certaine of my friends to heare maſſe, one of theſe worthy lords (whoſe name for ſome reſpect I will not vtter) ſate next vnto me, euen at the very inſtant when they lifted vppe that which they cal the body of Chriſt, and he hearing that *I* ſaide *Adoramus te Chriſte*, he demanded of me what theſe words *duramus te Chriſto* ſignified: but I vnderſtanding his demand anſwered him fitlie to the purpoſe: afterwardes hee asked mee what the ſacrament which the prieſt lifted vp with his two handes, and the chalice did ſignifie, and what was the cauſe that when he lifteth it vppe, wee vſe to beate our breaſte and our mouth with our hand: many ſuch fooliſh queſtions he asked me, more fitter for Paganes and Saraſins, then for Chriſtians. In regarde of the which, if before I accounted him for halfe a man, I now held him no better then a beaſt. And if you aske me if hee were a child, I anſwere, that though his demaundes were childiſh: yet did he exceed all of vs in age.

Doe you beleeue that he is (I ſay not onely a Gentleman but that which is more) a Chriſtian, although that his head was waſhed with the holy water of Baptiſme? Doe you repute him a Gentleman, becauſe he is deſcended of Gentlemen? God forbidde that hee ſhoulde ſo much as be accounted a man.

Neither will I yet keepe ſecret from you, that which happened of late (although in Honour I ſhoulde not declare it vnto you) for one of theſe Noblemen intending to cauſe a gowne of Satten to bee made for his Wife, hee brought the Taylor into the houſe where the ſtuffe lay readie vpon the table; and as the Tailour

was

was aboute to chawlke out the compaſſe of it, the Gentlemanne (whoſe name I will not diſcouer or make knowne) cauſing his Wife to ſtande vppe, ſaide vnto the Taylour: Sirrha, where wilt thou beginne to take meaſure of her, before, or behinde: the Tailour whoe was more diſcreete then the Nobleman, perceiuing his fooliſh demaund, ſaide vnto him; my Lorde, I muſt beginne to take meaſure on the ſides: the Lady was aſhamed thereat, and holding downe hir head, bluſhed to ſee his folly.

Now doe you thinke that ſuch men are to be called Noble, although that they deſcend of a noble ſtocke, and that their apparell is thicke laide on with lace? I ſhoulde rather iudge them depriued of nobilitie: you may ſee into what manifeſt ignorance nobility of bloud cauſeth a man to fall, whereof afterwardes pride is ingendred.

Here *Nennio* pauſed a while, and afterwards proceeded further in this ſort.

Yea? this nobility of bloud is not onlie cauſe of pride, and ignorance, but of vnſufferable euill, and ineuitable loſſe. How often hath there been cruel warre betweene the people of Rome? How many Nations hath beene raiſed in armes? How much bloud hath beene ſhedde through the continuall diſſentions which grewe betweene the noble men and the common people? Surely verie much, for the pride of noble men againſt the comminaltie, was growne to that height, & the deſire which they had to increaſe their wealth, by the occupation of that which belonged vnto other menne was ſo great, that the common people oftentimes did remain in more ſafety in waging war abroad, then they did in peace with the nobility at home, who handled them as their capital enimies, by which actiõs they had not only brought

brought the common people of Rome to extream pouerty, but all Italie: whereof did followe ciuill warre, and that bicause they did vsurpe both the goodes and landes of the cõminaltie: whereof did spring the lawe *Agraria*, which did forbid, that no man, whether he were noble, or of the common sort, should hold more land then a paire of oxen could plowe in fiue hundred daies: and that the enemies lands should be deuided amongst the people. Which lawe did so displease the nobility, that they conducted their armies euen to the extreame limits of Italie; and *Tiberius Gracchus* (succeeding as Tribune of the people) to fauour that lawe, the Romane liberty was cleane ouerthrowne. For thereof did arise such great hatred, that they came to armes, and to bloud, without measure: wherupon the people reposed themselues vpon *Marius*, and the nobility vpon *Scilla*; who after most cruell warre remained conquerour.

And the same disdaines, and inward enmity, reuiued betweene the Nobility and the communaltie, in the time of *Cesar* and *Pompey*, the one making himself the leader of *Marius* his side, the other taking part with *Scilla* as their cheefe conductor: whereof did followe infinite and cruell slaughters, *Cesar* in the ende beeing victorious, who was the first tyrant of Rome.

What shall I say of the bloudie butcherie, which followving after the suddaine death of *Asellius* (Pretor of Rome) who was set in that authoritie to reforme the insatiable vsuries which were so increased in the citie, by the rich and mighty, that the people entred into despaire, and with great furie did breake downe the Images of *Scilla*, and of *Pompey*, which were so hatefull vnto them? Greeuous likewise were the dissentions, which did spring in the famous Citie of Athens, betweene

tweene the noblemen and the people, during ỹ vvhich *Cassandra* was establiſhed by the nobilitie, chiefe of the faction againſt the comminalty, *Polipercon* being their leader: who not without great ſlaughter did driue *Caſſandra* into Macedonia, ſo that the people as conquerors remained at libertie. Whereuppon they did condemne the principall perſons of the contrary faction to death, and did baniſh others the citie, amongſt whō, *Demetrius Phalerius* was one, and *Phocion* that great captaine of theirs: whoe (albeit that his vertues were iudged worthy of al humane glory and praiſe) yet came he to be ſo hatefull vnto the common people, that euen vntill his death they denied him buriall.

How greeuous the hatred is which groweth by wicked oppreſsions, made by the nobility againſt the comminalty, they onely doe knovv who haue made tryall thereof. That which happened vnto *Fabius*, beeing Conſul, may make good proofe hereof, for he extreamly oppreſsing the people, hadde in ſuch ſort inflamed their greeuous hatred againſt him, the Romane armie buckling with their enemies, and holding the victorie for certaine and vndoubted, the ſouldiors rather reſolued to depriue themſelues of the victorie, then to giue him cauſe of triumph. Farre worſe then this happened to *Appius Claudius*, (a capitall enimie of the people) for he holding the Conſulſhip in the warre againſt the *Volſques*; the ſouldiors rather gaue him triumph of diſhonour then of victory, turning their backs to their enimy. And heere I will declare vnto you the ende of this *Appius Claudius*, who was woont to call a moſt vile priſon which was in Rome, the habitation of the Romaine people, but the name was not agreeable to the effect, for by the appointment of the Tribune of the people, he was ſhut vp in that priſon amongſt theeues,

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and murderers, and there put to death. But why doe I ſpeake onely of *Appius Claudius*, ſeeing that it hath alwaies remained as a naturall and hereditary inſtinct to that familie, with mortall hatred to purſue the commons, ſo that the chiefeſt of that houſe, vvere in continuall diſſention with the officers that vvere for the people.

By this you ſee, that the Nobilitie of bloud, is not onely cauſe of pride and ignorance, but of moſt cruell ſlaughters and mortall hatred.

Nennio gathered this laſt concluſion of his ſpeech, and afterward he followed on in this maner.

The nobilitie of bloud (moſt worthy gentlemen) beſides the calamities afore ſpoken of, dooth ingender a kind of enuy, that ſtil gnaweth in the heartes of noble men: for they ſeeing ſome amongſt the common ſort, deſeruedly aduanced to honour and dignity, through their ſingular value & vertue, immediatly there ariſeth in their hart intollerable enuy, which doth eat and conſume them, as the ſunne doth the ſnow. Of ſuch vigor was the enuie which increaſed in the hearts of the Romane nobility, when as they ſaw *Gn. Flauius*, whoſe father was a Libertine, created Pretor of the people, in regard vvhereof, they laid awaie their golden rings, and their trappings of their horſes, which vvere markes of nobility, which they vvere vvont to do, when they were ſad and ſorrovvful. And on a time the ſame *Gn. Flauius* being Pretor, going to viſit his collegue who was ſick, he met there many gentlemen of Rome, amongſt the vvhich one of them (in regard he vvas born of baſe parentage) moued not himſelfe to do him honour as Pretor, and their ſuperiour, vvhereof he made no account, but commanded that the chaire vvherein the greateſt and moſt vvorthy officers of Rome vvere caried throgh

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the city, should bee brought vnto him, and afterwardes caused it to be placed before the gate of the pallace, to the end that none of the gentlemen should issue forth, but they should euen in despite see him set in that chair, into the which none of them did euer ascend. Enuy like wise did cruelly afflict the hearts of the Romane nobilitie, vvhen as they savv *Ventidius Bassus*, of whom *Fabricio* did speak yesterday, of a base hackney man, to be mounted to the dignity of a Tribune, to the degree of Pretor, to be created *Summus Pontifex*, and finallie to be made Consull, in such sort ý they made verses vpon the baseneſſe of his birth.

But doe I say onely that the noble men are enuious ouer the common people, when as it doth with great vehemency finde place euen amongst themselues? Enuy was the cause of the horrible vvars vvhich did grovv between *Cornel. Scilla*, *Marius*, and *Cinna*, which were most noble men: betvveene *Cesar* and *Pompey*, vvho vvere Patriciens of Rome (of vvhom I did make mention of late) and of many more worthy Roman Consuls, of whō the auncient histories are repleat.

Enuy, which did proceed from the nobles, did bring *Pompey* after his Empires and triumphes, to remaine in his house, or in his Grange, he seldome daring to shevv himselfe publikely abroad. *Q. Metellus* shewed the hatred which he did beare vnto *Q. Pompeius*, when as he savv that after he had brought both of the countries of Spain into subiection, *Pompey* succeeded him, which was most odious vnto him. For he licensed the greater part of the souldiots to depart, caused the victuals to be spoiled, the weapons of the armie to be broken, did forbid that any man should giue the Elephants meate: and to conclude, left not any thing wherwith *Pompey* might defend himselfe against the enemies.

So great was the enuy vvhich poſſeſſed the mind of *Cato* of *Vtica*, becauſe that Ceſar had in Egypt defeated the partakers of *Pompey*, who were fled into Afrike after his death, that he ſlue himſelfe in Vtica. Enuy likewiſe moued Themiſtocles that valiant captaine, to perſecute that worthy and iuſt Ariſtides, both of them being noble men of Athens. But why do I ſo inlarge my diſcourſe, to recount to you ſo many ancient hiſtories.

Turne your eies (if you ſo pleaſe) vpon euery town, and euery place of the vvorld, inhabited by noble men, and thoſe of the common ſort; and you ſhall finde no place exempt, where there is not rooted amongſt noble men one with another, amongſt the nobilitie & the comminaltie, hatred, perſecution, enuy, ambition, ignorance, and pride. Theſe are the fruites which nobilitie of bloud doe giue to the mind, which likewiſe doth not bring any other grace to the body, becauſe it neiher maketh them more fair nor more liuely, nor more ſtrong, nor more witty, nor more aduiſed, nor more apt then other men who are borne of baſe bloud: forſomuch as therein nature worketh equally, and not the nobility of bloud.

Certainlie (quoth Maiſter *Iohn Franciſco*) it ſeemeth that it bringeth foorth in all places, not onely vnſauorie fruit, but moſt venemous and noiſome.

A bad root (anſwered M. *Dominico*) cannot produce good fruit: now nobility of bloud being brought into the world of a malicious root, what goodneſſe can it yeeld? Surely none at all.

M. *Io. Frãciſco* ſaid, what is that root ſo dangerous and venemous, whence nobility of bloud proceedeth?

I would tell you (quoth he) but that I ſhould diſpleſe *Nennio*, in interrupting him.

It ſhal not diſpleaſe me, anſwered *Nennio*, to hear you, ſo that you doe promiſe mee, to tell vs from whence

the roote of this Nobilitie of bloud doth proceed, vpon which condition it ſhall pleaſe me well to haue your opinion, ſo that you may boldly go forwardes: that being ſaid, M. *Dominico* turning himſelfe towards M. *Iohn Franciſco*, began to ſpeake in this maner.

It is an euident matter, that the great Architect of the world, created man, pure, ſimple, not ſpotted with vice, and perfectly good, but it is not to bee beleeued that he made him either noble or ignoble: Man then himſelfe was the inuenter and beginner of this Nobilitie. Hee being cauſe thereof, Nobilitie beganne in the firſt age, to be noted in thoſe (and they were eſteemed Noble) who either by force or fraude, did ſurmount others.

Cain the firſt man who was borne in the world, did ouercome his brother *Abel* and ſlew him, and he was the firſt who by deceit and crueltie did vſurpe the name of Nobilitie, in that thorough furious audacitie, hee brought other men into ſubiection, whereupon hee was equally honoured and reuerenced by them, and reputed honourable, more then any other. After him did ſucceede *Enoch Irad*, and others, who deſcending from *Cain* (that proud murtherer and vſurper of other mens goods, & ſo conſequently noble) they were likewiſe eſteemed noble. But *Seth* the third brother of *Cain* (a iuſt and good man, and ỹ firſt in the world who called on the name of God) he was not ſo much eſteemed, and reputed amongſt men, but was adiudged of a ſoft nature, abiect and vile, with all his poſteritie: and by this meanes, nobilitie tooke beginning.

By ſucceſsion of time, it pleaſed the great gouernor of heauen, and of earth, for the wickedneſſe which were generally committed on the earth, corrupted by man, who made no accompt of God, to deſtroy the

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world, by the opening of waters, of fountaines, of the depth, yea of the water gates of heauen: which hee would not first close vp, or stoppe, before that euerie liuing soule was destroied except *Noe*, who was so highly in his fauor, with the familie of those that did descend of *Seth* the ignoble. Of this *Noe* afterwardes, amongst others, did *Cham* descend, who shewed himselfe vnreuerent, and wicked towardes his father; *Nemrod* did succeed, of his Line a man verie mightie, and puissant, and full of wickednesse. He gaue the first beginning to the accursed vice of Tyrannous dominion, and by Tyrannie he ruled the kingdome of Babylon, of Arad, & others: Wherupon thorow his might and tyrannie, being become king, hee was adiudged most noble. Nowe great men grewe to such temeritie, that they constrained those, who at that time were rude and grosse, not onely to repute them as noble, but to adore them as Gods.

Hereupon their heires and successors were in a maner esteemed as Demy-Gods. And so the opinions of the first men (who to make a nobleman, did ground themselues vpon murther and crueltie, and in tyrannising ouer the people) did as it were from hand to hand, in such sorte extend their dominion, that we may truely conclude, that Nobilitie of bloud proceedeth euen from the first age of the worlde, from this generall roote.

The generations of men being increased in the world, and kingdomes possessed, it was the pleasure of kings and princes, that they who did most of al content them and fitted their humours best, should be seperated from the common people, in giuing them especiall priuiledges, graces, and preheminences, which were not graunted to the vulgar sorte: Wherefore, they and their

their ſucceſſors were held by the firſt people of the worlde, as men well pleaſing God, and becauſe they were ſeuered from the multitude, and reuerenced more then others, they were called Notable, which is as much as Noble. And for this cauſe the men of ỹ world, being extreamely deſirous of honor, and of glorie; and ſeeing that ſuch was the meanes to become noble, manie (to the ende they might obteine this glorie of nobilitie) did ſeeke to become pleaſing vnto kinges, and Princes. Some in ſhewing themſelues cruell murtherers of their enemies, others in boldly ranſacking the people, others to gratifie their prince, did giue them either their wife or their daughter in pray: ſome to delight him, did feede him with diſhoneſt pleaſures, others with flatterie, with treaſon, with money, & with other horrible wickedneſſe, and wretched deuiſes, to winne his fauour, by the which they did afterwardes obtaine priuiledges of Nobilitie for themſelues, and their poſteritie. This is the birth M. *Iohn Franciſco*, this is the beginning, from whence the Nobilitie of bloud did firſt ſpring, this is the pathe, this is the meanes, by the which they did ſo eaſily mount vp to the ſoueraign degree of Nobilitie. From hence it grew, from hence noble men had their creation. And if we would enter into conſideration of the behauiour, the cuſtomes, the maner of life of Noblemen of this age, ſurely wee ſhoulde finde them wrapped in vanities, in robberies, in cruelties, in treaſons, in wantonneſſe, in gaming, and manie other miſchiefes; ſo hard a thing it is for them to ſhake off this their firſt nature. And ſo ſtrong was the opinion of men, to place nobility in crueltie, in robbery, in wrong, that not onely they did repute thoſe noble, who were moſt fierce, and moſt faithleſſe, but euen amongſt vnreaſonable creatures,

they did holde, and doe yet at this day, accompt thoſe moſt noble, which are moſt cruell, moſt rauenous, moſt to bee dreaded, moſt fierce, moſt horrible, and moſt hurtfull to mankinde. As amongſt birds, the Eagle, the Grifon, the Faulkon: amongſt beaſtes of the earth, the Lion, the Dragon, the Tiger, the Leopard, the Beare, the Wolfe, the wilde Boare, the Serpent: amongſt the fiſh of the Sea, the Whale, the Dolphin, and ſuch like. Ancient men of that age, did beleeue, the very ſame of trees: for the moſt vnfruitfull, and thoſe that did bring leaſt commoditie vnto man, they did not onely eſteeme them moſte Noble, but they did euen conſecrate them vnto the Gods. As the leaued Oake to *Iupiter*, the greene Lawrell to *Apollo*, the high Cipreſſe, to *Pluto*, the blooming Mirhe to *Venus*, the imbracing Iuie vnto *Bacchus*, and others vnto other gods.

We ſee the enſignes which by antiquitie haue been attributed vnto the gods, that they doe euen ſhewe their crueltie, their force, and violence, foraſmuch as they giue thunder to *Iupiter*: to *Mars* a Launce, a Triple forke to *Neptune*; a ſharpe axe vnto *Bacchus*, to *Hercules* a clubbe, to *Saturne* a Sieth, which vſe hath extended it ſelfe vnto noble men, becauſe they haue choſen in their ſhields the moſt cruell and fierce beaſts, which can be imagined: for this man beareth in his armes the rauenous Eagle, that other the fierce Lyon, ſome one the ſtrong Bull, another the Lion, and the Eagle togither: ſome the fearefull Beare, others the Hinde, ſome Caſtles, others mountaines, this man a Tower, that man a Hill, ſome Chaines, ſome Fire, all being hurtfull inſtruments vnto man: and this onely to ſhewe their proud mindes, and hawtie thoughtes. By this then we may ſee, euen at this day, not onely how

peruerſe

peruerſe and wicked the beginning of nobility is, but euen the life and minde of noble men.

Maſter *Peter Anthony* taking the ſpeech vpon him ſaid: Yea but I haue ſeene in many places the armes of noble men, which did neither denote fiercenes nor cruelty, but were only beautified with roſes, violets, flowers, ſtars, croiſſants, and ſome of them were only diſtinguiſhed by diuers colours.

True it is (quoth Maſter *Dominico*) but thoſe armes ought not to be adiudged neither ſo ancient, nor ſo noble, neither do they ſet foorth ſuch warlike, and worthy actions as thoſe I ſpake of.

You may now ſee *Madam Camilla*, whether I had anie thing to ſay, or no, againſt the nobility of blood, albeit the other day, you did iudge mee to take part with *Poſidonio*, and did threaten me, becauſe I did in fauour of nobility of blood, alleadge ſome reaſons againſt *Fabricio*.

Certainely (quoth ſhee) you are this day worthy of your hire, and in rewarde of that which you haue ſpoken, the penalty you did incurre the other day ſhall bee forgiuen you.

I ſhall then (quoth Maſter *Dominico*) liue aſſured, & out of all ſuſpition, ſeeing that you doe abſolue mee: Without paſsing any further, *Nennio* entring againe into his diſcourſe, proceeded in this manner.

Albeit that rule, and tyranny ouer other, Maſter *Dominico*, gaue cauſe in thoſe firſt ages (as it doeth yet at this day) that the Lord, and the tyrant, bee reuerenced of the people, and by that meanes become noble, yet wee ought not to beleeue, that nobilitie is onelie growne by that meanes, for I doe finde that manie, and diuers haue beene the cauſes of the beginning thereof.

Men being greatly multiplied vpon the earth, and nations deuided after that renuing of the worlde, their life was licentious, and lawleſſe, and the greater part of them did encreaſe, inclining to euill, whereof murthers, violence, and robberies did growe on euery ſide, and there was no bridle for the wickedneſſe of man. Whereupon all men were moleſted, and troubled, whether they were good, or bad: For the eſtabliſhment then of ſome means to reſtraine theſe looſe people, to the ende that good men might liue aſſured, and the wicked be puniſhed according to their deſerts, men did ioine togither and did chooſe for their Prince, amongſt thoſe that were good, the moſt wiſe, the moſt prudent, the moſt iuſt, and of moſt vnderſtanding, to whom they did ſubmit themſelues, and gaue full power to puniſh outragious exceſſe, and wicked deedes, which might heere after happen, and condignlie to recompence good men.

From thence man was firſt called noble, (that is to ſaie notable in vertue aboue others. And the moſt part of the men of that age, growing rude of wit, groſſe of vnderſtaudi ng, without iudgement, and without any ornament of life, they who in vnderſtanding, in iudgement, and in politique vertue, did ſurpaſſe others, were ſeperated from the ignoraunt people, and ſo conſequently made noble: whoſe iſſue (that they might not degenerate but conſerue themſelues in the reputation, and nobilitie of their anceſtours) did ſtriue to followe their ſteps and vertue. VVhereupon they were inrolled in the regiſter of noblemen, and from thence by ſucceſſion it commeth, that nobilitie did deſcend to their poſteritie.

It happened often that townes were oppreſſed by tirants, aſſieged by potentates, and the people extreamely

ly oppreſſed: Wherefore a law was made, that whoſoeuer could deliuer the common wealth from ſo many oppreſsions, he & his ſucceſſors, ſhould be numbred amongſt noblemen: and by this meanes, many ſhewing the generoſitie and value of their courage, became noble in this manner.

You ſee three mighty cauſes, from the which nobility did ſpring, by the which it doth clearely appeare, that it deſcendeth from the vertues of the minde, riches likewiſe hath beene the cauſe to make men noble. Moreouer many in becomming tyrantes, and violently bringing others into ſubiection, haue made that the originall of their nobility, as by you M. *Dominico* hath beene ſaid. Theſe are the principall beginnings of nobility, from hence noblemen did firſt ſpring: ſo that the vertues of the minde, tyrannie, and riches, were the firſt meanes and way to attaine to nobilitie.

The companie was ſo intentiue to heare, and their memory & vnderſtanding ſo ſetled vpon *Nennio*, that they had almoſt loſt the remembraunce of themſelues when as ſuddainly the heard they trampling of horſes, galloping of courſers, knocking & opening of gates, wherefore our ſences being awaked, our backs turned, and we looking towardes the garden gates, infinitly deſiring to knowe who they were, wee might ſee two of their ſeruantes who brought vs certaine word of other company that were newly come, who had expreſly taken their iourney thither, to viſite vs, whereof ſome of them were ſtraightly ioyned vnto vs by kindred, others by friendſhip: who had brought their houndes with them, to paſſe the reſt of the day merily with vs, in hunting. But after they ſaw vs ſitting circlewiſe round about *Nennio*, vnder the ſhadow of ſweete ſmelling orenge trees, after they had ſaluted vs, not without ſome

wonder, they demaunded vvhat the cauſe might bee, that we ſate round about in that faſhion, and what plaie we were at, but ſeeing nothing about vs fit for anie paſtime, it maie be (quoth they) you are ſet to tell tales. Wherefore we hauing in as few wordes as we coulde, tolde them the ſucceſſe of the matter in queſtion, and how that the two daies before were ſpent in the ſame diſcourſe, with a ſingular contentment of the whole company: They vnderſtanding the matter we intreated of, did as it were enuie vs, and were not a little diſcontented that they had not beene there at the beginning. So they changing their former determination, and little caring for hunting, it pleaſed them better to ſtaie with vs, then to withdrawe vs from our enterpriſe begun, and almoſt ended, they contenting themſelues with the concluſion, and end of the queſtion, to remedy that which they had loſt in hearing the beginning, and middeſt thereof. Wherfore they being ſet and placed amongſt vs, as conueniently as they might, wee turned our lookes, our eares, and our mindes towardes *Nennio*; who ſeeing vs ſet in as good order as we were before, without anie further ſtaie added theſe words following vnto his former ſpeech.

If the noble men vvhich doe liue at this daie, Maſter *Dominico*, doe vſe ſuch violences, ſuch theftes, ſuch laſciuiouſneſſe, and other ſuch miſchiefes, as you alleadge, they are not worthie of life: and as for mee, I will iudge them the moſt vile, infamous and reproachfull perſons which euer liued on earth, although they did deſcend of moſt noble parentes. For the worthines of their blood is obſcured and cleane defaced by their euill conditions, whereby maie bee gathered, that the worthineſſe of blood (though at the firſt it giueth a good impreſsion, and addeth grace to a true

and

and perfect noble man) yet is it not sufficient to make him perfectlie noble. It is then necessarie (to grace the nobilitie of blood) to adorne his life with worthie and valorous actions, and to endow himselfe with qualities fit for a gentleman.

Master Iohn Francisco saide, and what are those qualities and conditions, which doe set foorth a gentleman, and doe make him perfectly noble?

They are (quoth *Nenuio*) these, to follow vertue and to flie vice.

Whereunto Master *Iohn Francisco* replied, and what are those vertues, and those vices?

Nennio answered, I esteeme it a superfluous matter to declare it vnto you, you knowing them right well, as one in whom all vertue shineth, and vice taketh no place.

But to satisfie your minde heerein, I say that the qualities and ornamentes which are requisite for the conseruation of nobility, to bring a gentleman to soueraigne perfection are many, but I wil discourse of those vnto you which seeme vnto me to bee most necessarie. A gentleman borne of noble blood ought to be intirely good, and therewithall he ought in like manner to bee wise, prudent, iust and temperate, aduised in all his actions, according as the degree of his nobilitie doeth require, he ought to be couragious and gratious, but especially of a sharpe wit, quicke iudgement, and good vnderstanding: in his discourse honest, eloquent, and modest, in as much as in any action whatsoeuer modestie bringeth great ornament vnto man? Let him carrie grauitie with him, which bringeth credite, and reputation amongst men. Let him yet bee respectiue, reuerent, gentle, and courteous, for by that meanes hee shall become pleasing, and amiable to

all men, and the brightneſſe of his nobility ſhall thereby ſhine and increaſe much more. Let him ſeeke to pleaſe others in all lawfull matters, wherein a generall good will may be gotten. Let him doe his indeuour to ſpread abroade a good reputation of himſelfe, and to imprint a good opinion of himſelfe in the mindes of men. Which hee ſhall eaſily bring to paſſe, if beſides thoſe matters I haue ſpoken of, hee doe take heede to abſtaine from thoſe things, which doe not only wholly take away, but in any thing blot or diminiſh his credite. Let him not be ambitious, proud, arrogant, high minded, nor diſcourteous, becauſe that ſuch kinde of behauior is wont to breed lothſomnes, hatred, euil wil, & diſdaine. Let him not be vaineglorious, in praiſing himſelfe, nor too much affected in his actions. Let him auoide the euill ſpeeches of other men. But why doe I thus reckon vp particularly that which belongeth vnto him, ſeeing that euery man ought of himſelfe to know that which defraudeth him of honour, and renowne, & that which doth increaſe it.

Here *Nennio* pauſed a while, which Maſter *Peter Anthonie* perceiuing, taking the ſpeech vpon him ſaid thus.

I would wiſh *Nennio*, that thou wouldeſt now ſhew vnto vs what exerciſe and conuerſation a gentleman hauing theſe partes in him, ſhall vſe.

Nennio anſwered, that maie eaſily be gathered from thoſe preceptes I haue giuen: for if hee bee good, his conuerſation and exerciſe likewiſe ſhall be good.

Yea but I could wiſh, that thou wouldeſt be pleaſed, to diſcourſe more particularly thereof.

Whereunto *Nennio* ſaid. It is certaine that the value and excellency of man, proceedeth either from learning, or armes: For the name, the glorie, and the nobility

nobility likewiſe, of ſo many worthy men, and ſo many valiant knights, ſhould long ſince haue beene extinguiſhed, with their body, if their minde had not beene graced either with armes, or learning. To the ende then, that he that is borne of noble blood, may become excellent, and valorous amongſt noble men, he ought wholly to addict himſelfe thereto, & imploy his whole minde and ſtudy therein. But I will not particularlie ſeeke in euery point to handle the qualities fit for a gentleman noblie borne, for beſides that time woulde not ſuffer me to doe it, he may ſupply that which wanteth in conſidering thoſe meanes I haue aboue rehearſed: only I will not forbeare to aduertiſe him of this, that in all his actions hee ought to conſider the ende, and to gouerne himſelfe in them with honeſt mediocrity, ſhewing his worthines with diſcretion, and good iudgment: and that he take good heede vnto his conuerſation, for men will iudge him to be ſuch as his conuerſation is, and if hee keepe company with wicked and bad perſons, he ſhall be reputed as they are. Theſe are the true qualities, theſe are the right exerciſes, which he that deſireth to become perfectly noble, ought to obſerue, although hee bee not deſcended of noble bloud.

But me thinketh we haue ſtaide very long vpon theſe two ſortes of nobilitie. Wherefore to the end I may withhold you no longer: I will paſſe on to the other kinde thereof. *Nennio* hauing thus ſpoken he pauſed a while, as if he would haue refreſhed himſelfe, and afterwards proceeded in this wiſe.

We haue worthy gentlemen, as I thinke, ſufficiently diſcourſed of the force vertue, and worthineſſe, of the nobility of blood, conioyned with riches: and likewiſe of the greatnes, and of the effectes and power of the nobilitie

nobilitie of the minde, and therewithall handled the originall of them both. But becauſe there are manie who are adorned with theſe two ſorts of nobility, from thence proceedeth that compounded or mixed nobilitie, which I did ſpeake of in the beginning of my diſcourſe, which is nothing elſe but a certaine qualitie which proceedeth from the worthines of the blood of our anceſtours, graced with good conditions and lawdable vertues iſſuing from the minde. He then that is poſſeſſed with this kinde of nobilitie exceedeth him far both in nobilitie and worthineſſe, who is onlie noble by blood, or by vertue, as one in whom both blood and vertue doe iointlie concurre togither. Which I intending to perſwade you, I need not alleadge any reaſons vnto you beeing ſufficiently manifeſt of it ſelfe, that it containeth more excellency, and glory, then both the former: Albeit that thou *Fabricio*, diddeſt endeuor yeſterday, with no leſſe pregnant, then apparāt argumēts, to ſhew that the contrary is true, to wit, that he is worthy of more dignity, who only is become noble of himſelfe, by the nobility of the minde, then hee that was renowned both with the minde, and with bloud, which is not ſo true, as thou diddeſt affirme it to bee. And as for me I would anſwere, that which ſhould be fit vnto theſe thy argumentes were it not that Maſter *Peter Anthonie* had on the ſuddaine plaide my part therein.

I who harkened vnto all theſe thinges with no leſſe attention then the reſt, did in the middeſt of this diſcourſe, call to minde the dreame, which was the occaſion that I forſooke that kinde of life I led before I came to this place. In the which dreame (that I may put you in minde thereof againe) it ſeemed vnto mee firſt that I did ſee a company of youthfull Ladies, in the middeſt of whom, as their queene, did march one, rich-

ly

lie decked with golde, and precious ſtones. After her I ſaw another band of knightes followe, with their enſignes in their hand, who had with them a Lady apparelled in ſanguin colour. After theſe followed this Lady, whoſe authority was ſo full of reuerence, who was attended on with a company no leſſe learned, then wiſe. To cõclude, it ſeemed vnto me that I ſaw an other Ladie, ſo much more worthy then the reſt, as the ende excelleth the middeſt, as by my former diſcourſe I recited vnto you. I doe nowe conſider by the qualities of this laſt queen (whoſe brightnes was ſuch that if it were poſsible for me aſwell to ſee the ſame waking, as I did perceiue it ſleeping, the light of my eies woulde ſurelie bee dimmed) that thee did reſemble no other thing, then true nobilitie, which man deſiring to obtaine, to become noble, hee had neede to haue the three former meanes recited by mee, to wit, that he participate of the grace of the firſt queene, which I did beholde, (which was riches) and that hee doe deſcend of the other auncient Ladie (which did denote nobilitie of race) afterwardes it behoueth him to follow the thirde (I meane vertue) which is more neceſſarie then anie the other meanes: and ſo hauing thē, without all doubt he ſhal eaſilie come vnto this laſt queene (which repreſenteth nobility it ſelfe and the perfection thereof.) And of ſuch neceſsitie is the meanes of vertue, to attaine vnto the laſt degree of true nobilitie, that the ancient *Romanes* did eaſilie beleeue, they coulde not obtaine honour, (that is to ſaie, nobilitie) without vertue: vvhich two they did reuerence as goddeſſes, and builte vnto them two temples, to their praiſe, which were ſo conioyned togither, that there was no man coulde enter into the temple of honour, except hee did firſt paſſe

thorough the temple of vertue: to ſhew thereby, that no man ought to be honoured nor iudged noble, if hee obtained not this nobility by the meanes of vertue. Wherefore *I* come now to the concluſion of *Nennio*, who iudged acccording to troth, that how noble ſo euer a man be, either by bloud, by riches, or by vertue only, that he becommeth farre more renowmed and noble if conioyntly he inioy riches, nobilitie of bloud, and vertue.

Nennio confirming this againe, after he perceiued I had nothing elſe to ſay, he proceeded in this wiſe.

Certainely I will not only name him noble, but moſt noble, neither will I call it perfect nobilitie, but moſt perfect.

I do not thinke that this compounded nobility can be moſt perfect (quoth Maſter *John Franciſco*) as it were oppoſing himſelf vnto *Nennio* his ſpeech, if it do ſpring of the two former, one of them (to wit nobility of blood) being not perfect, according to your owne ſaying, but the other is; how cā it be then, that an vnperfect thing, conioyned with that which is perfect, can make that moſt perfect, which ſpringeth of the coniunction of theſe two: ſurely I can ſcarſlie be perſwaded therein.

True it is anſwered *Nennio*, I ſaid as much as you affirme, but yet I did not denie, but that nobility of blood was a kinde of nobilitie exalted by the vulgar ſort. The nobility of bloode then, and nobleneſſe of the minde, when they concur togither in one ſubiect, ſurely both the vulgar ſort, and men of wiſedome, will hold ſuch a one to be moſt noble. And like as wee iudge him to bee rich, who hath great ſtore of golde and ſiluer, notwithſtanding we will holde him to be more wealthy, if therunto you adde iewels and precious ſtones. The verie li[k]e happeneth vnto him, who being borne rich, and of noble

noble blood, hath his minde fraught with good conditions, & vertues, for he ought to be adiudged moſt noble and his nobility moſt perfect.

You ſee then (worthy gentlemen) that noble men of whom we ſpeake, are of three ſortes, as I haue long ſince giuen you to vnderſtand: howbeit the reſt of men are not wholy to be accounted ignoble, and baſe. For there are ſome who though they bee not deſcended of any noble ſtocke, yet are they very wealthy, and thoſe amongſt their fellow citizens, in the cittie where they dwell, are had in great eſtimation. So it ſeemeth vnto me that we may well ſay, that men (ſpeaking only of the qualities of ſuch as are noble, or ignoble) in what place ſoeuer, ought principally to be deuided into three companies. One of the which is of thoſe, whoſe eſtate doeth contemptibly conſiſt in the moſt vile and moſt abiect place, who ſince they were firſt borne into the world, haue imploied all their labour and induſtrie to the carefull gouernement of bruit beaſtes depriued of reaſon, to the tillage of the ground, and to al other corporall labour neceſſary for the vſe of man, whereby their life ought rather to be tearmed ſeruile then free. The ſecond and meane condition, is of thoſe that are not noble, which yet are of degree worthy of eſtimation & honour, in which company, are comprehended ſuch, who though they are not of noble bloud, yet at the leaſt they do come of a honourable and honeſt familie, which degree & eſtate is of no ſmall account and reckoning amongſt men. In times paſt in the citie of Rome (famous and renowned more then any other place in the world) there were noble men, and others not noble, vnder which two eſtates not only the rule, and gouernement of the cittie did conſiſt, but of the whole Empire, and the ſimple people had no leſſe au-

thoritie and power then the patriciens to make & publiſh laws, by which they were to be gouerned. And that is not only vſed in forraine citties, but euen in ours, the gouernment whereof is equallie in common with the gentlemen, and the people.

The thirde ſort is of noble men, whoſe condition hath beene largelie entreated of theſe two daies: and theſe manner of noble men are likewiſe deuided into three companies, as I this day with a long diſcourſe ſhewed you.

Nennio, as one deſirous to come to the ende of his ſpeech, was ready to proceed farther, when as M. *Peter Anthony* turning towards him ſaid in this wiſe. Let vs a little ſtay here, for if my memory ſerue me well, beſides theſe three ſortes of nobilitie, which thou haſt very wel opened vnto vs, there is yet another, vnleſſe I haue not well marked thy words which thou didſt vtter this daie in the beginning of thy diſcourſe, by which (beſides that ſort of nobility which thou didſt cal compoũded) there is that kinde, which is called ciuile nobility: wherefore it were not amiſſe that with the former thou diddeſt likewiſe open this vnto vs.

Whereunto *Nennio*, without any further ſtay anſwered. I was likewiſe comming to the ſpeech thereof, and let not my laſt words moue you at all where I ſaide that nobility is deuided into 3 ſorts, in the which this other which ſeemeth a 4 is comprehended, for I do place it in the ſame degree with nobility of blood, and therfore it is not neceſſary that I adde it vnto the former as a fourth degree of nobility. It is called ciuile, as cõming from thence from whence al ciuility proceedeth, to wit from kings and princes. And it is no other thing but a certain dignity giuen by the prince, which many times doth not end in the perſon of him to whom ſuch honor

was

was granted, but extendeth it ſelfe for euer vnto his poſterity, according as it pleaſeth the prince. And the conformity betweene ciuile nobility, and nobility of blood is ſo great, that if we looke narrowly into the firſt beginning (in caſe anie certainety thereof may bee knowne) ſurely it appeareth it dependeth of nobility of blood. For the king hauing by his priuiledges created you and all your deſcendants noble by ciuile nobility, ſuch opinion and reputation remaining of you with thoſe of our city, who doubteth but in ſucceſsion of time your poſterity ſhal be adiudged noble of blood, and not of ciuile nobility? Surely not any man. Which may bee gathered by that which Maſter *Dominico* & I ſaid before, ſpeaking of the nobility of blood.

One of my brethren oppoſing himſelfe vnto *Nennio* his ſpeech, and as it were taking the wordes out of his mouth ſaid.

I beleeue that it is not yet confeſſed that a king, or an Emperour can make a noble man. For an Emperour, a king, or a prince may well make ſome courtier rich, or any other, and beſtowe ſome office vpon him; but I doe not thinke for all that, that he can make him noble: And it is to no purpoſe to ſay, as well you maie; that in as much as hee is the Soueraigne glorie, and farre more noble then any other, that therefore he may make men honourable, and noble. For ſuppoſe that thou wert moſt iuſt, moſt wiſe, and moſt prudent: and that I did deſire to bee made iuſt, wiſe, and prudent by thee, could that poſsibly be done? Truely all the whole world togither, could not bring it to paſſe, if by nature my mind were not apt to learn ſuch vertue: for they are gifts of the mind, and conſequently not eaſie to be tranſported from one body to another. I wil then ſaie that a prince, albeit he be moſt noble, yet can he hardly make another noble.

Of

Of which opinion the Emperour *Giſmond* was, who being earneſtly entreated by one of his loyall and faithfull courtiers, borne of baſe parentage, that hee woulde vouchſafe to make him noble: he anſwerd, I may make thee free, and rich, but noble I cannot make thee; as being a gift not vnder his commaund, but in the power of nature.

So ſoone as my brother had declared his opinion; *Nennio* purpoſing to anſwere his obiection, beganne to ſay thus.

Vnderſtanding that nobility conſiſteth in the vertues of the minde, as you doe, it may eaſily be yeelded vnto, that an Emperour or a Prince cannot make another man noble: but taking it in that ſort as I did giue it you, it were ſurely no ſmall fault to ſay, that vnto him to whō ſo large authority is graunted in this world, to eſtabliſh and abrogate lawes at his pleaſure, this farre leſſe power ſhoulde bee denied. Doeth not hee create Earles, Marqueſſes, Dukes, & ſuch like, who by ſuch dignities are made moſt noble? Yes ſurely, He may then farre more eaſily make one noble: not that he is able to endow him with iuſtice, with prudence, with wiſedome, & other vertues of the minde: but yet this he may do, that he ſhall be eſteemed and reputed in the rancke of gentlemen, & be numbred amongſt them. And this fauorite of the Emperour *Giſmond* did ſeeke nothing elſe of him when he craued to bee made noble, then that, whereas he was not reckoned amongſt noble men, nor ſuch account made of him amongſt men, & that he did not inioy the like freedomes that noble men did, that thorough his royall priuiledges, and fauour, he might haue power to take place amongſt noble men, which without doubt he might haue graunted vnto him. But *Giſmond* vnderſtoode him not in this maner, but in that

ſorte

ſorte that you take it, and therefore his requeſt was denied. How many doe wee ſee that haue beene made knightes in all kingdomes both by the Emperour and other princes of the world? Many ſurely. Who is there then that doth not iudge them noble ſith the king will haue it ſo? If he grant for euer to him and to his ſucceſſours ſuch prerogatiues as noble men haue, ſuch freedomes and markes of honour as are fit for them? Who dare account him and his ſucceſſours for other then noblemen? Truely no man. Thus you may ſee how the prince may make an other man noble, giuing his fauor and dignity to whom it pleaſeth him. The dignity of a doctor is equall vnto the degree of a knight which hee obtaineth as a reward of his vertues, & is no leſſe eſteemed and reuerenced then the other.

The Lady *Caſſandra* ſeeing that *Nennio* did ſomewhat take breath to refreſh himſelfe after his long diſcourſe, raiſing vp her ſelfe as ſhee leaned vpon one of her ſides, and turning towardes him, ſhee ſaide in this wiſe.

Nennio, if I did wel vnderſtand your ſpeech you formerly concluded, that men of skil & learning are of the troupe of ſuch as are noble by nobility of the mind, and now it ſeemeth that you would haue them bee in place equal to knights, which are by you put in the company of thoſe who are noble by ciuile nobility, and ciuile nobility differeth as much from the nobility of the minde as noblemes of blood doth, by your own ſaying, wherefore I do not ſee how this may well paſſe without controll.

Whereunto *Nennio* preſently anſwered, wee haue not yet ſpoken (*Madam*) of the dignity that learned men doe obtaine by their skill, but onely ſhewed that learned and vertuous men are perfectly noble. Whereupon

vpon to the end that they might euerie where be exalted and reuerenced, the princes of the world haue worthily ordained, that this dignity by the which they are called Doctors, ſhould be added to their perfect nobility, that is to ſay, that by the meanes of the ſciences they haue learned they may beare the lawrell, not that the ſame doth make them more noble or perfect: and here hence it is, that whoſoeuer hath attained that dignity, if likewiſe with his ſcience and vertue he bee adorned with good conditions, he ſhal not only be enobled with the nobility of the mind, but likwiſe with ciuile nobility, which is in the ſame degree that nobility of blood is, as I ſaid vnto you. Howbeit doe not perſwade your ſelues that euery man of skill and learning is made a perfect gentleman onlie by vertue of his ſcience, for if he be vicious and wicked, fraught with bad conditions, although he be one of the learnedſt men in the world, he ſhall bee helde ſo much the more baſe and ignoble. Whereupon I conclude, that theſe dignities of knights and Doctors, doe march in this laſt troupe of ciuile nobilitie.

But whether of theſe two dignities is moſt excellent and noble (quoth the Ladie *Caſſandra*) that which the *Doctors* doe purchaſe by their learning, or knightes by armes?

Madam (quoth *Nennio*) you propounde a great queſtion, peraduenture no leſſe doubtfull then that we now diſcourſe of, and if we haue been debating of that matter three daies, as much time at the leaſt woulde bee required (if not more) for the well opening of this matter.

Is it ſo doubtfull ſaide ſhee, or doe you make vs beleeue ſo, to ſpare your labour? If that bee the cauſe, I doe in curteſie enioyne you before wee departe from hence

hence to reſolue herein.

Whereunto *Nennio* replied, *Madam*, It is trulie euen as I tell you, that not onlie that ſmall time that is lefte vs of this euening, but two or three daies woulde ſcarce ſuffice to determine thereof: As for my ſelfe, I would willingly burne all theſe torches to night, if I might come to a reſolution thereof. For nothing ſhoulde ſeeme painefull vnto me that might bring you pleaſure, and contentment, and though it ſhould, yet would I ſo indure it, as it ſhoulde ſeeme but a paſtime vnto me.

I giue you great thankes (quoth ſhee) of your ready minde to doe me pleaſure, as indeede to ſay the troth, you haue alwaies ſhewed no leſſe in effectes, then your gracious words haue imported.

But yet let mee intreate, if ſo it pleaſe the reſt of the company (as I doubt not but it wil) that ſome other day be appointed to entreate thereof: For ſuch kind of diſcourſes doe bring with them ſuch delight, that for mine owne part, I could bee contented at all times to heare them.

Nennio ſaid hereunto. If you were as carefull to command me *Madam*, as I am ready to obey you, I doubt not but in time, you woulde ceaſe to commaund mee. Wherefore when opportunity ſhall ſerue, I will prouide to ſet my ſelfe in a readines, to determine this other queſtion which you haue propounded, as well as my ability will giue me leaue.

It were good (quoth the Lady *Laura*) to heare & ſee the ende of this queſtion which you haue ſet a broach *Madã*, but it is not greatly material nor doth not much cõcern this our diſcourſe: wherfore my opinion is, that before you make a final end of the cõtrouerſie you haue in hãd, that like as you haue ſhewed only what nobi-

lity is amongst you men: so you would take the paines *Nennio*, to declare the nobility of women, least wee should seeme to be smally accounted of, or altogither forgotten by you. Wherefore let it not displease you, to let vs vnderstande your opinion therein, for I am certaine it will adde both grace, and ornament to your former speech.

It cannot do lesse (answered *Nennio*) then adde both grace and ornament thereto, for whatsoeuer man doth, should of it selfe haue but a bad grace, if you vvomen did not with your pleasant company, and entertainement make it more delightfull. But you shall vnderstand (*Madam*) that we haue not forgotten you as you suppose, for in this our discourse although we haue brought in no examples of women, yet doth it hold for them, and whatsoeuer hath beene spoken of vs, may be said of you, albeit not without some little difference, as in few words you shall heare.

We haue in your nobility most (honourable Ladies) to consider the salfesame three qualities, which vvee haue considered in the nobility of man, to wit, nobilitie of bloud, of the minde, and compounded nobility. The Originall of the first descendeth of the same beginning from the which the nobility of man doeth proceede; from the father, and not from the mother; as Master *Dominico* did very aptly declare vnto you the other day in answering the Ladie *Cassandra*, who went about to prooue that in the nobility of man, because it is deriued of blood, the mothers nobility, and not the fathers ought to be considered, and therefore I neede not anie longer to stay thereupon, beeing true, and plaine of it selfe.

The second which is the nobility of the mind, ought likewise in women to bee considered in the vertues of the

the minde: For they ought to ſet foorth themſelues with gentle conditions, good behauiour, gracious humility, ſimple purenes, worthy honeſty, commendable chaſtitie, giftes fit, and proper for Ladies, which make them to be eſteemed, praiſed, honoured, pleaſing, ful of vertue, and moſt noble. What grater ignobility, or baſenes can be attributed vnto Ladies borne of noble bloud, then contemned diſhoneſtie, vnchaſte pudicity, diſloyall thoughts, wandering imaginations leading to ill cuſtomes, and finallie a life without any conſideration? Not any in my iudgement.

So likewiſe a Ladie cannot if ſhee woulde ſeeke the whole worlde, finde any better meanes to become noble, & excellent, then the giftes aboue mentioned. And therefore we may wel conclude, that a Lady not borne of any noble bloud, but beautified with good conditions, ought farre to be preferred before her, whoſe birth is noble, & renowmed, and by her vnordinate behauior becommeth baſe, and infamous, becauſe her naturall nobility is by her looſenes vtterly loſt. Likewiſe women are ennobled by their wiſedome, and learning. The knowledge of the ſciences turned to the greate glorie and commendation of *Cornelia* the mother of the *Gracchi*, of *Lelia*, and *Hortenſia*, the daughters of *Lelius*, and of Q. *Hortenſius*, of *Proba Valeria* of Rome, and of infinite others. But weapons are not ſo fit for women: For albeit that *Pentheſilia*, *Artemiſia*, *Semiramis*, *Camilla*, *Cleopatra*, *Talaſqua*, the *Amazonian* Ladies, and manie others did vſe them valiantly, yet were they mighty Queenes, and puiſſant in armes, of whoſe eſtate and nobilitie, I intend not to ſpeake. To proceed further, I doe altogither equall compoſed nobility, both of the man and woman, and therfore I need not ſtand any longer thereon.

As concerning ciuile nobilitie, it is diuers waies purchaſed by women, and not as men doe attaine thereunto. For as much as any womã though ſhe be not noble by birth, yet may ſhe become noble, by the inſeparable knot of mariage, if ſhee ioine her ſelfe in matrimony to a noble man: for diuine mariage beeing of ſo great vertue, doth of two bodies, make one fleſh; ſo that thee is made noble by the nobilitie of her huſband, enlightened with his beames, cloathed with his dignities, enioieth his priuiledges, receiueth with him the ſame preheminences, and in her are noted all ſuch graces as her huſband hath: and by the power of mariage a woman doth forſake the name of her owne family, and taketh the name of her huſbands houſe; & ſhee doth not onlie take the name, but retaineth the other qualities of her huſband. So that if a woman be only naturally borne, I meane that if ſhee bee borne illegitimate, ſhee becommeth legitimate if ſhee be ioined in mariage with a huſband lawfully borne, becauſe as I ſaide ſhee receiueth from her huſband the ſame qualities he enioieth.

Seeing it is ſo (ſaide the Lady *Aurelia*) that a woman borne of no noble bloud, being ioyned in mariage with a gentlemã, becommeth noble, what ſhall we ſay to the contrary hereof, if a gentlewoman do mary with one of the common ſort, ſhall he be made noble by the nobilitie of his wife?

No ſurely (quoth *Nennio*) but rather the nobility ſhe had before is cleane quenched.

That is great wonder anſwered the Lady, & I knowe not howe that ſhoulde come to paſſe, that the woman ſhould receiue nobility from the man, and not the huſband by his wife. Surely it ſeemeth a very ſtrang thing vnto me. But like as in all other things you men are wõt to keep vs ſilly women as low as you can, to the end you

may

may preuaile in al your enterprises, euē so do you in this.

Whereunto he presently answered. You women are alwaies angry, and mistrustfull, perswading your selues, that in matters of the worlde, especially in such as doe concerne you, we do proceede as we list, hauing no regarde of you at all, but I say that you are all in generall greatly deceiued. Do not you know *Madā*, that the husband is the gouernor, the guide, & the head of his wife, & not the wife of her husband? Certainly he is; & euen as the head is the most worthy member of the body, so it is no wonder if the husband as the head, doth ennoble the wife, as his member. Now the husband being the principal captain, the wife who followeth him, is therin to follow the nature of her principal head: but this hapneth not cōtrarily, for thē the course of nature shuld be clean chāged. If thē the nature of the husbād be noble, without doubt ỹ woman, albeit she be ignoble by birth, she shall by him be made noble: if he be abiect, & base, although she be discended of noble family, she shal likewise be ignoble. And to declare this more plainely vnto you *Madā*, you cannot deny, but that the children that come of an ignoble father, though the mother be noble, shal be reputed amongst the common sort: & those that are begotten of a noble father, albeit the mother be ignoble, yet shal they by the people be held in the rācke of noble men. Likewise we see al men set vp the fathers armes, & not the mothers, in their houses, at burials, in the church, & elsewhere. And not only this hath place in their armories, but the son taketh the name of his fathers house, & not of the mothers, which is manifest to al men. You may see then, that you haue no cause to be offended with vs, whē as your selfe may giue iudgment in this matter. And you know right wel, that the son is not to follow the honor, nor dignity, the greatnes, ỹ cōditions, nor the nobility of the mother, but of the father

Yet doe I not denie but in the birth of man, ſome beames of nobilitie do ſhine from the mother, which togither with the nobility of the father, doth make it more pleaſing, and delightful, not that of it ſelfe it is ſufficiēt to make a mā noble, as you may haue vnderſtood.

But becauſe I haue this day farther enlarged my diſcourſe, then my meaning was (ſo that we cannot longer ſtaie thereon, becauſe that time doth more and more force our departure from hence, and to take our recreation in ſome other place,) I will ſet apart all other reaſons and doubtes of nobilitie, which might happen in our diſcourſe, and come to the determining of the matter in queſtion.

You haue heard (vvorthie gentlemen) theſe three daies, a diſcourſe of nobilitie, no leſſe pleaſing to the eares, then delightfull to the vnderſtanding. Of the which in the two firſt daies diſcourſe, are gathered two opinions.

The one, that true nobilitie conſiſteth in blood and riches, and not in vertue onely: the other, that it conſiſteth in the vertues of the minde, and not in blood, nor riches. And albeit that they ſeeme cleane contrarie, the one to the other, by that which *Poſsidonio*, and *Fabricio* related (vvho were rather carried vvith affection then reaſon, which is not to bee wondered at, ſeeing that they beeing guided vvith paſsion of minde, each of them did ſeeke the defence of his ovvne matter and not anie other mans:) notvvithſtanding *I* doe not iudge them cleane contrarie: for if they vvere, one of them ſhoulde bee nobilitie, and the other ſhoulde not, vvhich I vvoulde not for anie thing affirme, it beeing a matter reſolued, that a great part of men (vvhereof I haue reckoned vppe a good portion) doe iudge, repute, and holde him to be no-

(for

ble, who is ingendred of noble blood, and I likewiſe (for manie reaſons before alleadged) doe take parte vvith them, although that thou vventeſt about yeſterdaie *Fabricio* verie ſubtillie to prooue that ſuch a one was not noble: And that thou on the other ſide *Poſsidonio*, vvert verie earneſt to maintaine for certaine, that vertue did not make a man excellent, and noble, and that learning was but vaine in matter of nobilitie, wherein thou wert farre deceiued: prooving moreouer that riches was the ſoueraigne good of man; and *Fabricio* that they were occaſion of all euill. Certainlie both of you did ſhewe, that beeing drawen vvith the paſsion of the minde, each of you did ſpeake your pleaſure: for indeede they are not of themſelues neither good, nor euill, but a meane betweene both, and ſuch, as by vſe we doe make them. For if wee beſtowe them badlie, they are ſurelie euill; if we ſpende them vvell, I ſee no cauſe vvhy they ſhoulde bee euill. They are not neceſſarie vnto true nobility, yet doe they bring ſome aide thereunto, in as much as there is no vertue in the world, nor any dignity, that can be gotten without theſe meanes, eſpecially in this age, as of late I ſaid vnto you.

And hee that deſireth them to the intent he may bee a helpe vnto others, is not to be blamed, ſo that this his affection do not ſurpaſſe a certain tẽpered mediocrity.

But leauing all theſe diſcourſes apart, and intending (*Poſsidonio*, and *Fabricio*) to come to the concluſion of our ſpeech. God knoweth whether it grieueth mee, or not, to giue ſentence this daie, becauſe I am certaine, that the pronouncing thereof cannot be, without the diſquieting of the thoughtes, vexing of the heart, and griefe of minde vnto one of you.

Neuertheleſſe (quoth both of them, with a willing minde)

minde) ſpeake freelie for all that: for it may bee, vvee ſhall depart from hence with more loue, and kindneſſe, when we haue heard the determinate end of our diſputation, then when we came hither; like as in wraſtling, of neceſsitie one of vs muſt needes take a fall.

Whereunto *Nennio* anſwered: you did both of you promiſe mee ſo much, before I did receiue the charge of ſo heauy a burthen. But howſoeuer it fall out, that I may commit no error, I wil this day ſhew my ſelfe conformable to the opinion of the Emperour *Giſmond*, who being reprehended by ſome of his familiar friends, becauſe he did aduance men of baſe birth, yet adorned with vertue, and not ſuch as were borne of noble bloud: He anſwered. As for me, I will exalt ſuch as ought to bee preferred before any other men liuing, and thoſe from whom true nobilitie proceedeth: which opinion becauſe it agreeth with reaſon I intende to followe. Wherefore I ſaie, that like as it is a thing worthy greater commendation, to builde a newe pallace, to ſtoare it with moueables, and to inhabite it, then it is onlie to dwel therein: ſo is he worthy of far more greater glorie who of himſelfe becommeth noble, then hee who is ſimplie borne noble: and for this cauſe therefore (and many more, no leſſe pregnant, then true reaſons heretofore alleadged,) I iudge, and determine this: that the nobilitie of the minde, is farre more true, and farre more perfect, then the nobility of blood conioyned with riches: and conſequently thou *Poſsidonio*, beeing noble by birth only, and *Fabricio* by the vertues of his minde, as hath a long time beene prooued vnto you, I ſay that he is famous with more height and perfection of nobility, and ſo likewiſe worthy of more honour and glorie then thou art. And therefore I giue the victory of the queſtion in cõtrouerſie, togither with the prize,

vnto

vnto thee *Fabricio*, as to the moſt noble:

Nennio hauing ſpoken in this wiſe, he helde his peace, & *Fabricio* hauing yeelded him due thanks for his iuſt ſentence, with very good wordes, without any longer ſtay, with a good grace hee tooke the ring, and turning towards *Poſsidonio*, he ſpake vnto him in this manner.

I will neuer permit but that thou likewiſe ſhalt be partaker of this ſentence *Poſtidonio*, for if it hath beene fauourable vnto me, it ſhal likewiſe in parte bee pleaſing vnto thee, and therefore the Ring ſhal remaine with thee, which yet thou ſhalt not weare in remembrance of the Ladie *Virginia* who gaue it, but of me. So he extending his hand gaue him the ring, and albeit that oftentimes hee refuſed it, yet in the ende being conſtrained thereunto by the companie, hee tooke it in ſigne of brotherlie friendſhip.

Scarſe were theſe laſte wordes ended, and the ring giuen by *Fabricio*, accepted of by *Poſsidonio*, but all the Ladies with a cheerefull countenance did riſe vppe from their places, to ſhewe themſelues after the faſhion of women, that they were glad and wel pleaſed with *Fabricio*, all their voices being heard, but the Lady *Camilla* was louder then any of the reſt, reioicing eſpeciallie at his victorie, who being likewiſe riſen, & with a quicke and ſpeedie pace, marching towardes the greene Oliue trees of the garden (for ſhee knewe right in what eſtimation the leaues thereof were, and how

much worthy of commendation he was, who was deſeruedlie crowned with them) hauing broken ſome branches of them ſhe ſuddenlie made a garland of them interlaced with flowers, ſuch as yong maidens are wont to make: and therewithal (with her owne handes) ſhee crowned *Fabricio*, vſing theſe ſpeeches vnto him with a womanlie voice. *Thou ſhalt weare it in ſigne of victorie.*

Wee likewiſe being riſen from our places, and being met togither in the galleries, and ſtanding at the windovves which looked towards the garden, from whence a ſweet gale of wind did blowe, wee ſtill did diſcourſe amongſt our ſelues of that which had paſſed, & eſpeciallie of the determining of the diſputation, and of the victorie purchaſed by *Fabricio*: All of them equally commending no leſſe the ready liberality of *Fabricio*, in beſtowing the ring vpon *Poſsidonio*, then his good mind in accepting thereof: who albeit he had not gotten the victorie in this controuerſie, yet in debating the matter with *Fabricio*, hee alleadged no weake reaſons thereby to haue become conquerour.

Thus we remained there vntill ſupper time approched, when as the tables being couered, vnder the freſh ayre, after that we had ſupped with great contentment of vs all, wee paſſed the reſt of the night in ſport and paſtime, vntill it was time to go to bed. And before we departed from thence, wee all with one conſent gaue order, hovv vve ſhould ſpend ỹ next day folowing: which albeit it was paſ-

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fed in honeſt and pleaſaunt exerciſe, yet did I not determine to enter into any further diſcourſe therof. That which hath bin ſpoken this day (being the laſt) in reuerence of him who gouerneth al things, and who by his heauenlie will hath hitherto beene my guide, and conductor, ſhal at this time be ſufficient.

FINIS.

